U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management

Volume 3

IDAHO WILDERNESS STUDY REPORT

U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management

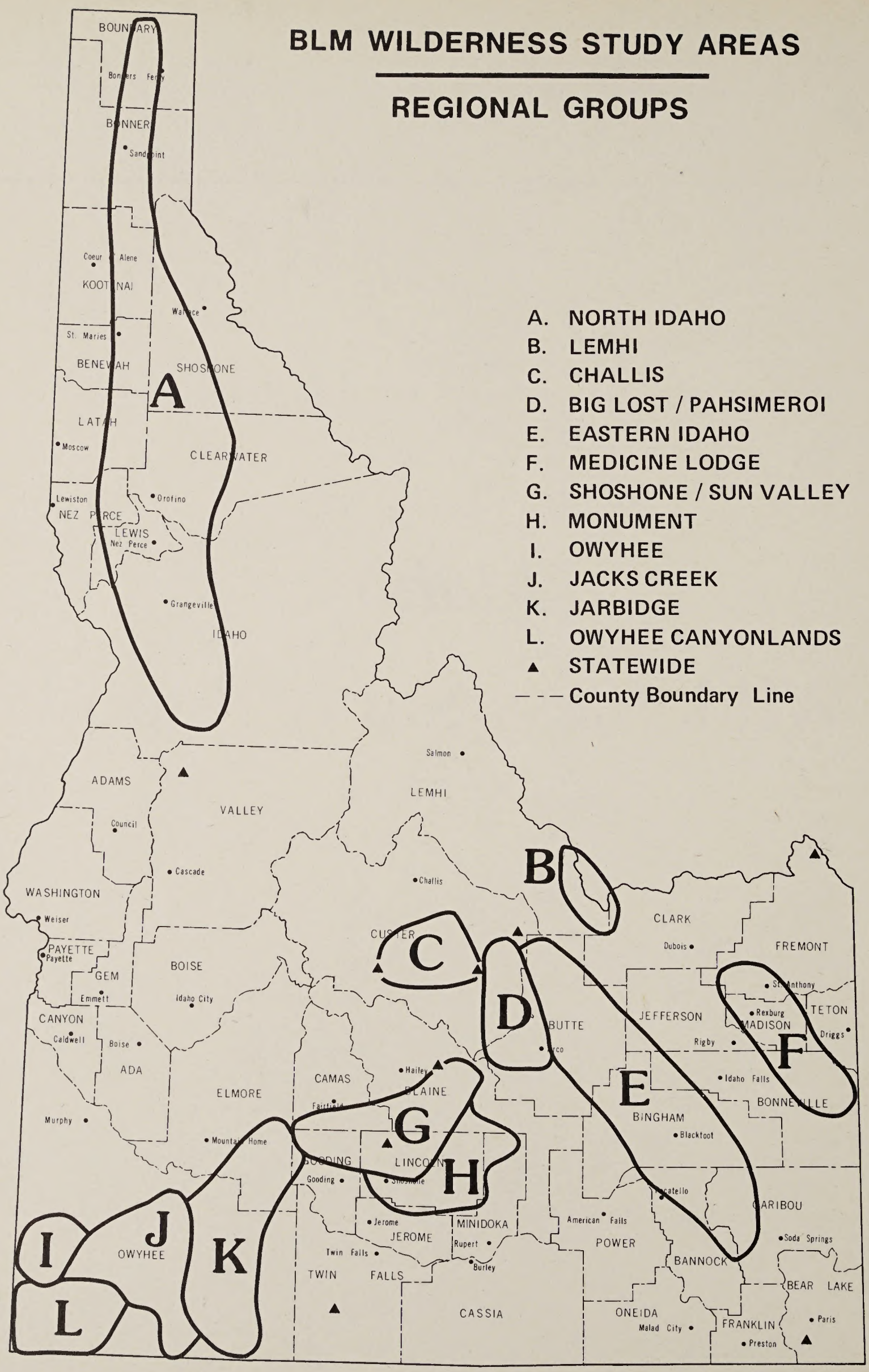
Idaho

Wilderness Study Report

MAP 1

BLM WILDERNESS STUDY AREAS

REGIONAL GROUPS



- A. NORTH IDAHO
- B. LEMHI
- C. CHALLIS
- D. BIG LOST / PAHSIMEROI
- E. EASTERN IDAHO
- F. MEDICINE LODGE
- G. SHOSHONE / SUN VALLEY
- H. MONUMENT
- I. OWYHEE
- J. JACKS CREEK
- K. JARBIDGE
- L. OWYHEE CANYONLANDS
- ▲ STATEWIDE
- – – – County Boundary Line

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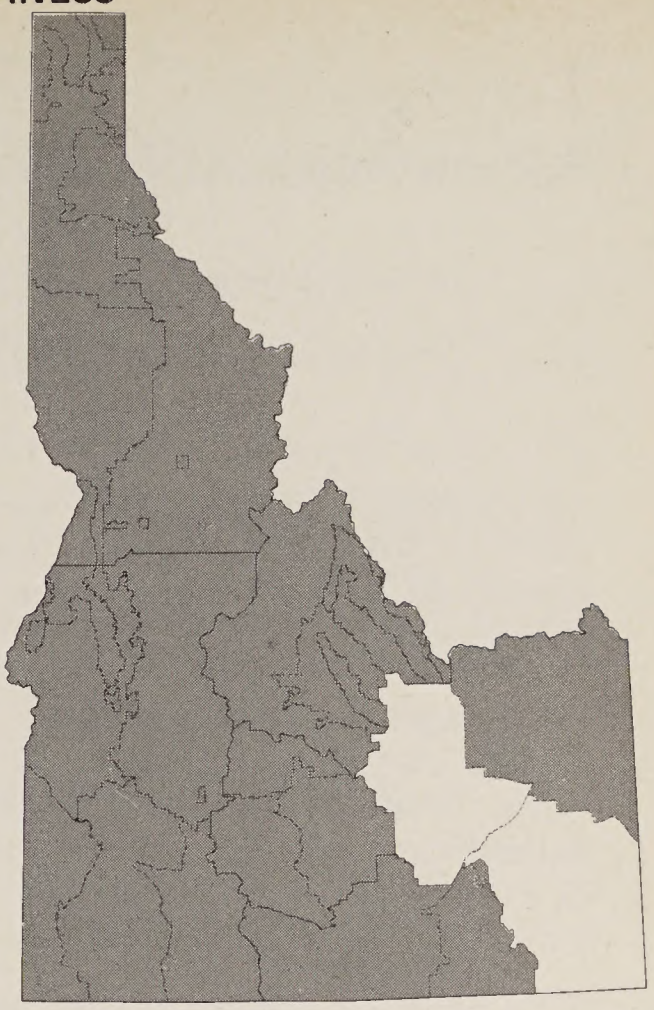
SUMMARY ANALYSIS OF SPECIFIC WSA RECOMMENDATIONS

BIG LOST/PAHSIMEROI WILDERNESS

BIG LOST / PAHSIMEROI WILDERNESS



LEGEND

—— DISTRICT BOUNDARY

– – – RESOURCE AREA BOUNDARY

WILDERNESS STUDY AREA

BIG LOST / PAHSIMEROI

1. Burnt Creek
2. White Knob Mountains
3. Appendicitis Hill

1

BIG BUTTE

2

3

RESOURCE

AREA

POCATELLO

RESOURCE

AREA

N

0 10 20 30 40 50

Scale in Miles

Appendicitis Hill Wilderness Study Area

1. The Study Area -- 21,900 acres

The Appendicitis Hill WSA (ID-31-14) is located in Butte County five miles north of Arco, Idaho. The WSA includes 21,900 acres of public land. Inholdings consist of 640 acres of state land (see Table 1). Boundaries are generally private land on the northwest, south of Antelope Creek, and roads and public and private land on the east and south.

Appendicitis Hill lies between Antelope Creek and the Big Lost River drainages and contains several intermittent streams. The area is mountainous with Crawford Peak rising to 8,523 feet, almost 2,900 feet above Antelope Valley. Lower elevation hills are generally rounded, supporting sagebrush and grass. Several canyons contain impressive rock outcrops and caves. High, north-facing slopes support concentrated stands of Douglas-fir. Chokecherry and mountain mahogany can be found on slopes and canyon walls. Stands of aspen and willows grow in Newman and Chokecherry Canyons.

The WSA was studied under Section 603 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) and was included in the Big Lost Management Framework Plan/Pahsimeroi Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) filed in September 1986. Three alternatives were analyzed in the EIS for the Appendicitis Hill WSA: the proposed action (no wilderness) alternative, which is the recommendation of this report; a partial wilderness alternative; and an all wilderness alternative.

2. Recommendation and Rationale

0 acres recommended for wilderness

21,900 acres recommended for nonwilderness

The recommendation for the Appendicitis Hill WSA is to release the area for uses other than wilderness. The environmentally preferable alternative is the all wilderness alternative. It would cause the least change from the natural environment over the long term. Although the recommendation is not the environmentally preferable alternative, BLM will use all practical means to avoid or minimize adverse environmental impacts. Existing regulations, BLM policy and the Big Lost Management Framework Plan will guide the use of the land to mitigate impacts. The Appendicitis Hill Proposal map shows the lands recommended nonsuitable for wilderness designation.

The Appendicitis Hill WSA is not recommended for wilderness designation for the following reasons:

> Certain conditions adversely affect BLM's ability to manage this area as wilderness over the long term. The six miles of dead-end roads have the potential to degrade solitude and visitor perception of naturalness by seeing and hearing motor vehicles within the area. Motor vehicle use and associated impacts are expected to increase. The area also contains 18 miles of vehicle trails that enter the WSA from all sides. These trails are located in the WSA's lowlands and canyons. Natural barriers are lacking to prevent vehicle trespass where use has historically occurred, primarily during the hunting seasons. Even with signing, patrols and public education, vehicle trespass is expected because of the area's remote location and distance from administrative personnel. Under these conditions it would be difficult, but not impossible, for BLM to maintain the WSA's wilderness values.

There are numerous site-specific impacts on naturalness. Impacts include numerous unimproved vehicle ways and livestock watering sites. Eighteen miles of motor vehicle ways enter the WSA from all sides. Along with the ways, there are 14 developed livestock watering sites. Visitors would encounter these human-caused imprints as they travel into 15 of the WSA's canyons.

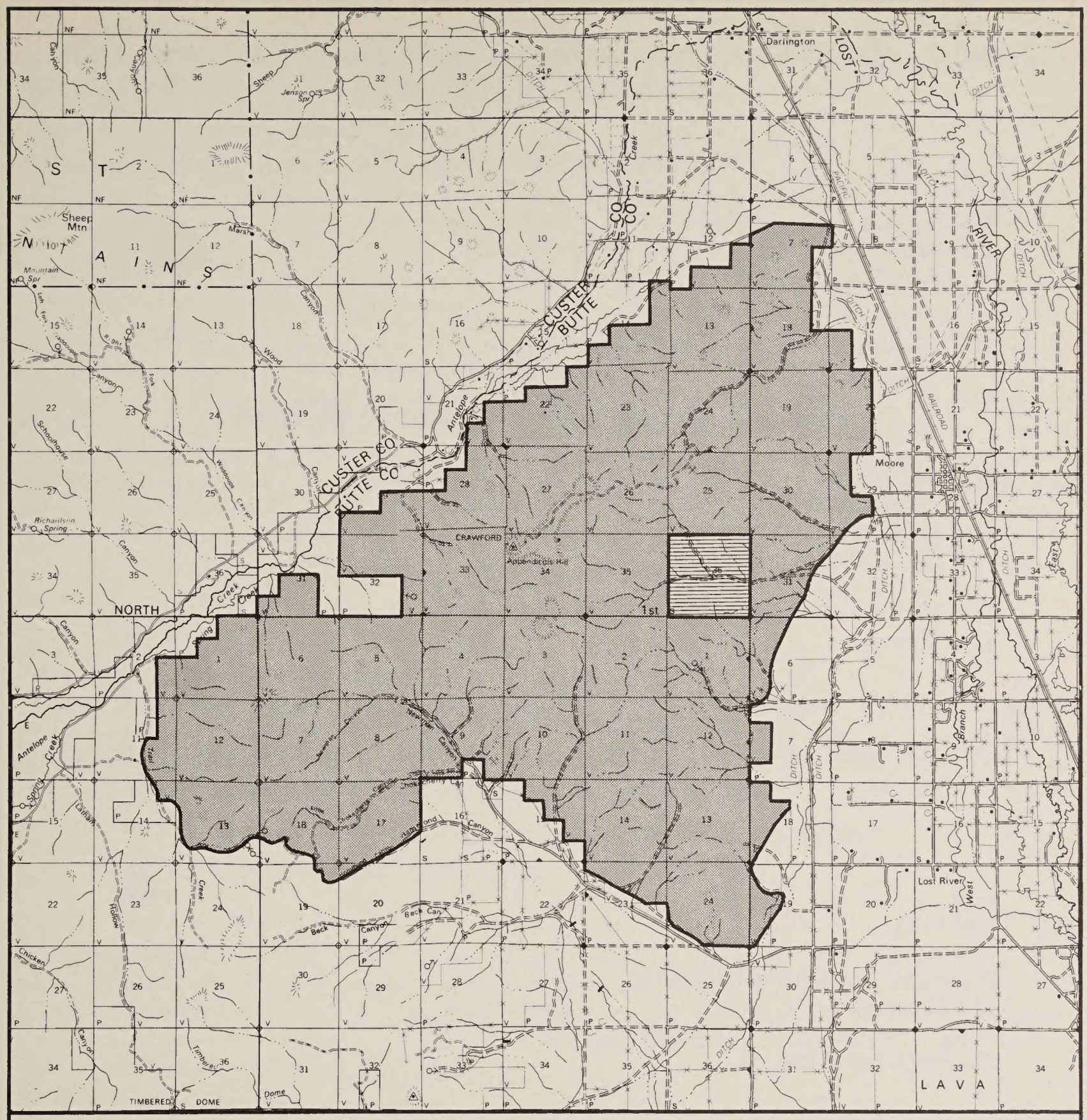
The WSA does not contribute significant solitude and primitive recreation opportunities in an area of Idaho already abundant in wilderness experiences. The WSA's opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation are judged to be less than exemplary. Solitude is available but the area is relatively small and will be impacted by vehicle traffic on dead-end roads within the WSA. Primitive recreation opportunities are present but the area lacks significant physical features that attract wilderness users. Other roadless areas and designated wilderness in the nearby mountain ranges offer similar primitive opportunities but are more attractive to recreationists. They include over four million acres of designated wilderness in six areas and more than 400,000 acres in five roadless areas. The roadless areas are located in central Idaho where the WSA is situated.

Treatment of mule deer winter range habitat with mechanized equipment is necessary. Winter habitat in this area is limited and stable and healthy populations depend on adequate forage. The mechanical treatment of forage species will help maintain good deer populations.

Motorized recreation use will continue on existing roads and trails and will occur primarily during hunting season. The use amounts to approximately 50 visitor days annually.

BLM recognizes that the Appendicitis Hill WSA possesses the minimum characteristics to qualify for wilderness study but difficulties in wilderness management and the trade-offs with other resource uses outweigh the benefits of wilderness designation.

This area has high wildlife values for wintering deer and elk herds. Improvements necessary to enhance wildlife habitat would not be compatible with wilderness values and would not be allowed.



RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS

RECOMMENDED FOR NONWILDERNESS

LAND OUTSIDE WSA RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS

SPLIT ESTATE

STATE

PRIVATE

1 0 1 2 3

Scale in Miles

ID-31-14
APPENDICITIS HILL
PROPOSAL

NOVEMBER 1988

Table 1 -- Land Status and Acreage Summary of the Study Area
APPENDICITIS HILL WSA

Within Wilderness Study Area

BLM (surface and subsurface)	21,900
Split Estate (BLM surface only)	0
Inholdings (state, private)	640
Total	22,540

Within the Recommended Wilderness Boundary

BLM (within WSA)	0
BLM (outside WSA)	0
Split Estate (within WSA)	0
Split Estate (outside WSA)	0
Total BLM Land Recommended for Wilderness	0
Inholdings (state, private)	0
State land (outside WSA)	0

Within the Area Not Recommended for Wilderness

BLM	21,900
Split Estate	0
Total BLM Land Not Recommended for Wilderness	21,900
Inholdings (state, private)	640

3. Criteria Considered in Developing the Wilderness Recommendations

Wilderness Characteristics

A. Naturalness

The Appendicitis Hill WSA is essentially natural in appearance but has numerous human-caused imprints. The most apparent changes to the WSA's natural character are vehicle roads and trails and livestock watering sites. Three dead-end road sections penetrate three of the WSA's canyons from one to four miles. Another 18 miles of vehicle trails follow canyon bottoms, traverse ridges and lead to peaks in the area. The vehicle trails are mostly used to maintain 14 livestock water developments and manage grazing use. Visitors would encounter these human-caused imprints as they travel into 15 of the WSA's canyons. The WSA's good topographic screening tends to decrease the effect of the impacts; however, most of the impacts are concentrated along routes a wilderness visitor would normally travel.

B. Solitude

Within the Appendicitis Hill WSA there exists outstanding opportunities for solitude. The steep topography, numerous canyons and variety of vegetation screens visitors from each other. However, influences outside the WSA's boundary have an affect on the quality of solitude. These influences include vehicle travel on the dead-end roads, views of agricultural activity and vehicle traffic along the northwestern and southwestern boundary.

C. Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

Outstanding primitive and unconfined recreational opportunities in the WSA include hiking, backpacking, hunting, wildlife observation, photography, climbing and sightseeing. The steep and rugged terrain makes these recreational activities challenging. Both day and overnight trips can be taken among the canyons, peaks and other points of interest. Scenic views of the surrounding mountain ranges, valley floors and lava plain are excellent from the WSA's high ridges and peaks.

Primitive recreation opportunities are present but the area lacks significant physical features that attract wilderness users. Other roadless areas and designated wilderness in nearby mountain ranges offer similar primitive opportunities but are more attractive to recreationists. They include over four million acres of designated wilderness in six areas and more than 400,000 acres in five roadless areas. The roadless areas are located in central Idaho where the WSA is situated.

D. Special Features

There are no special feature in the Appendicitis Hill WSA.

Diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System

A. Assessing the Diversity of Natural Systems and Features as Represented by Ecosystems

The Appendicitis Hill WSA is located in the Rocky Mountain Forest Province -- Sagebrush Steppe Ecosystem. Wilderness designation of this WSA would not add a new ecosystem to the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS). This ecosystem is represented by four designated areas with 76,129 acres. There are eight other BLM study areas in the state under study with this ecosystem. This information is summarized on Table 2.

TABLE 2

Ecosystem Representation

Bailey-Kuchler Classification	NWPS Areas areas	NWPS Areas acres	Other BLM Studies areas	Other BLM Studies acres
Rocky Mountain Forest Province				
		NATIONWIDE		
Sagebrush Steppe Ecosystem	4	76,129	23	247,843
		IDAHO		
Sagebrush Steppe Ecosystem	0	0	8	162,710

B. Expanding the Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive Recreation Within a Day's Driving Time (Five Hours) of Major Population Centers

The Appendicitis Hill WSA is within a five-hour drive from Boise, Idaho. Table 3 summarizes the number and acreage of designated areas and other BLM study areas within a five-hour drive of the population center.

Table 3

Wilderness Opportunities for Residents of Major Population Centers

Population Centers	NWPS Areas		Other BLM Studies	
	areas	acres	areas	acres
Boise, Idaho	16	4,741,570	141	5,374,250

C. Balancing the Geographic Distribution of Wilderness Areas

Idaho has the largest wilderness area in the contiguous 48 states, the 2.2 million acre Frank Church - River of No Return Wilderness. Designation of Appendicitis Hill WSA would not help balance geographic distribution of wilderness.

Manageability

Certain conditions interfere with BLM's ability to manage this area as wilderness over the long term. The six miles of dead-end roads have the potential to degrade solitude and visitor perception of naturalness by seeing and hearing motor vehicles within the area. The area also contains 18 miles of vehicle trails that enter the WSA from all sides. These trails are located in the WSA's lowlands and canyons and are accessible to motor vehicle use. Natural barriers are lacking to prevent vehicle trespass where use has occurred primarily during hunting season. Even with signing, patrols and public education, vehicle trespass is expected because the area's remote location and distance from administrative personnel. Under these conditions it would be difficult for BLM to maintain the WSA's wilderness values. A boundary adjustment to improve manageability was considered but was not found to be feasible. Changes in the WSA's boundary would not improve wilderness manageability without significantly decreasing the area's size and integrity. A change would be difficult or impossible to recognize unless a fence were constructed along the boundary.

If the WSA is designated wilderness, the State of Idaho has indicated a willingness to exchange the 640 acre state section for lands outside the WSA. This exchange would maintain the integrity of the area and enhance manageability.

Energy and Minerals Resource Values

A Geology, Energy and Mineral (GEM) assessment report was prepared for the Appendicitis Hill WSA in 1983 (Geoexplorers International, Inc., 1983). Conclusions from the report are:

> The Appendicitis Hill WSA has been classified as having moderate favorability for oil and gas. The basis of this classification is the structural setting of the WSA, which includes excellent potential for the development of traps, indications of subsurface structures from private geophysical data, the presence of potential hydrocarbon sources and reservoir beds in the stratigraphic section and a favorable thermal history of the source rocks. The WSA is classified as having low favorability for other leasable resources including phosphate, bitumen and asphalt. The lack of known occurrences and the generally unfavorable geologic environment of the WSA leads to the low classification.
>
> The WSA is rated low-to-moderate favorability for metallic metals including lead, zinc, silver and copper. The low rating is assigned because of the low level of detail of published geologic mapping and the lack of geochemical and geophysical data. Within the WSA, there are three mineral occurrences. They consist of prospect pits or shafts. The mineral content of these occurrences is unknown.
>
> Lastly, the WSA is classified as having moderate favorability for common varieties of limestone with potential for building stone and aggregate production. There are 11 known occurrences of sand and gravel on the border of or just outside the WSA. Use of these areas as sources of sand and gravel is primarily for county road maintenance.

Impacts on Resources

The comparative impact table on the following page summarizes the effects on pertinent resources for all the alternatives considered including designation or nondesignation of the entire Appendicitis Hill WSA area as wilderness.

Table 4
Comparative Summary of the Impacts by Alternative
WSA ID-31-14 (APPENDICITIS HILL)

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	PROPOSED ACTION (NO WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE)	PARTIAL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE	ALL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE
Impacts on Wilderness Values	Naturalness and solitude lost or impaired on 1,515 acres in short term; long-term loss or impairment on 1,315 acres. No legal protection of wilderness values on 21,900 acres.	Wilderness values retained on 13,670 acres. No legal protection on 8,230 acres but no development or impairing use is anticipated on this portion. Impacts to solitude and naturalness would not occur on 1,315 acres.	Wilderness values retained on 21,900 acres. Impacts to solitude and naturalness would not occur on 1,315 acres.
Impacts to Energy and Mineral Development	No Impact.	Subject to valid existing rights on 13,670 acres of oil and gas leases, the WSA would be withdrawn from location and leasing. Because of moderate potential for occurrence of energy or mineral resources, minor impacts are anticipated.	Subject to valid existing rights on 21,900 acres of oil and gas leases, the WSA would be withdrawn from location and leasing. Because of moderate potential for occurrence of energy or mineral resources, minor impacts are anticipated.
Impacts to Motorized Recreation Use	No Impact. Vehicle use limited to existing roads and trails.	Motorized recreation use, amounting to 15 visitor days, would be foregone annually. Insignificant impact due to similar or superior opportunities on nearby public land. Vehicle use limited to existing roads and trails on 8,230 acres.	50 visitor days annually displaced from 13,670 acres closed to ORVs. Insignificant impact due to similar or superior opportunities on nearby public land.
Impacts to Timber Harvest and Management	No Impact. 300 acres of Douglas-fir commercially thinned; logging on remaining 570 acres unlikely in foreseeable future.	325 MBF harvest foregone. Logging on remaining 570 acres of commercial forest also foregone but sales are unlikely in the foreseeable future.	325 MBF harvest foregone. Logging on remaining 570 acres of commercial forest also foregone but sales are unlikely in the foreseeable future.
Impacts to Mule Deer Habitat Improvement	No Impact. 500 acres of winter range improved by mechanically thinning decadent mountain mahogany. Population increased by 30% (360 deer).	500 acres of winter range improvement foregone. Long-term reduction of mule deer population by as much as 30% (360 deer).	500 acres of winter range improvement foregone. Long-term reduction of mule deer population by as much as 30% (360 deer).

Local Social and Economic Considerations

No significant social effects would occur as a result of wilderness designation of the Appendicitis Hill WSA.

Summary of WSA-Specific Public Comments

BLM's wilderness inventory and study were conducted with extensive public participation and public involvement was an important consideration in making wilderness recommendations. BLM solicited public involvement in the study phase through scoping meetings, a 90-day public comment period and two formal hearings on the Big Lost/Pahsimeroi Draft Wilderness EIS. Comments received during the inventory period and EIS scoping efforts were used to develop significant study issues and various alternatives for the ultimate management of those lands found to have wilderness value.

Wilderness was not an issue in the original Big Lost MFP and was not a subject of comments. No comments received during the wilderness inventory were deferred for consideration during the study.

Twelve written comments were received during the Draft EIS comment period that mentioned the Appendicitis Hill WSA. Nine comments supported more wilderness than recommended, while three comments indicated a preference for the proposed action of no wilderness.

Seven government agencies provided written responses to the Draft EIS. The Idaho Department of Fish and Game and Idaho Historical Society indicated they had no comment. The U.S. Geological Survey, Federal Aviation Administration, Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of Energy commented that they had no objection to the proposed action (no wilderness) for the WSA. The Idaho Air National Guard did not support the proposed action and stated that 1,368 low-level training flights were flown in the vicinity of the WSA. The Guard feels that these missions have a significant impact on solitude in the area and wilderness designation could subject current available airspace to possible reduction which it opposes.

White Knob Mountains Wilderness Study Area

1. The Study Area -- 9,950 acres

The White Knob Mountains WSA (ID-31-17) is located in Butte County ten miles north of Arco, Idaho. The WSA includes 9,950 acres of public land. No inholdings are present within the WSA (see Table 1). Boundaries are generally the Challis National Forest on the west and north, the Waddoups Canyon road on the north and northeast and private and state land subdivisions on the east, south and southwest.

The WSA is characterized by foothill and mountainous terrain with the highest point rising 2,000 feet above Antelope Valley to an elevation of 7,955 feet. Several well-defined drainages with southward orientations feed Cherry and Antelope Creeks. While the majority of the area supports a sagebrush-bunchgrass complex, scattered and concentrated stands of Douglas-fir occur at higher elevations. Mountain mahogany is often found between the sage-to-Douglas-fir transition or on the tops and slopes of lower hills with cooler aspects. Several pockets of aspen and willow surround moist spring areas in upper Waddoups Canyon.

The WSA was studied under Section 603 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) and was included in the Big Lost Management Framework Plan/Pahsimeroi Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) filed in September 1986. Two alternatives were analyzed in the EIS for the White Knob Mountains WSA: the proposed action (no wilderness) alternative, which is the recommendation of this report; and an all wilderness alternative.

2. Recommendation and Rationale

0 acres recommended for wilderness

9,950 acres recommended for nonwilderness

The recommendation for the White Knob Mountains WSA is to release the area for uses other than wilderness. The environmentally preferable alternative is the all wilderness alternative. It would cause the least change from the natural environment over the long term. The recommendation would use all practical means to avoid or minimize adverse environmental impacts. Existing regulations, BLM policy and the Big Lost Management Framework Plan will guide the use of the land to mitigate impacts. The Appendicitis Hill WSA Proposal map shows the lands recommended nonsuitable for wilderness designation.

The White Knob Mountains WSA is not recommended for wilderness designation for the following reasons:

Certain conditions adversely affect BLM's ability to manage this area as wilderness over the long term. The two miles of the Waddoups Canyon Road that penetrate to the center of the area have the potential to lower solitude and visitor perception of naturalness by seeing and hearing motor vehicles within the area. Solitude and primitive recreation opportunities, although considered outstanding, can be found on many other nearby areas. Six vehicle trails enter and penetrate the WSA from one to two miles. Natural barriers are lacking to prevent vehicle trespass where use has historically occurred, primarily during hunting season. Even with signing, patrols and public education, vehicle trespass is expected because of the area's remote location and distance from administrative personnel. Under these conditions it would be difficult, but not impossible, for BLM to maintain the WSA's wilderness values.

There are numerous site-specific impacts on naturalness. Impacts include numerous unimproved vehicle ways and livestock watering sites. Six miles of motor vehicle ways enter the WSA. Along with the ways, there are five developed livestock watering sites. Visitors would encounter these human-caused imprints as they travel into four of the WSA's canyons.

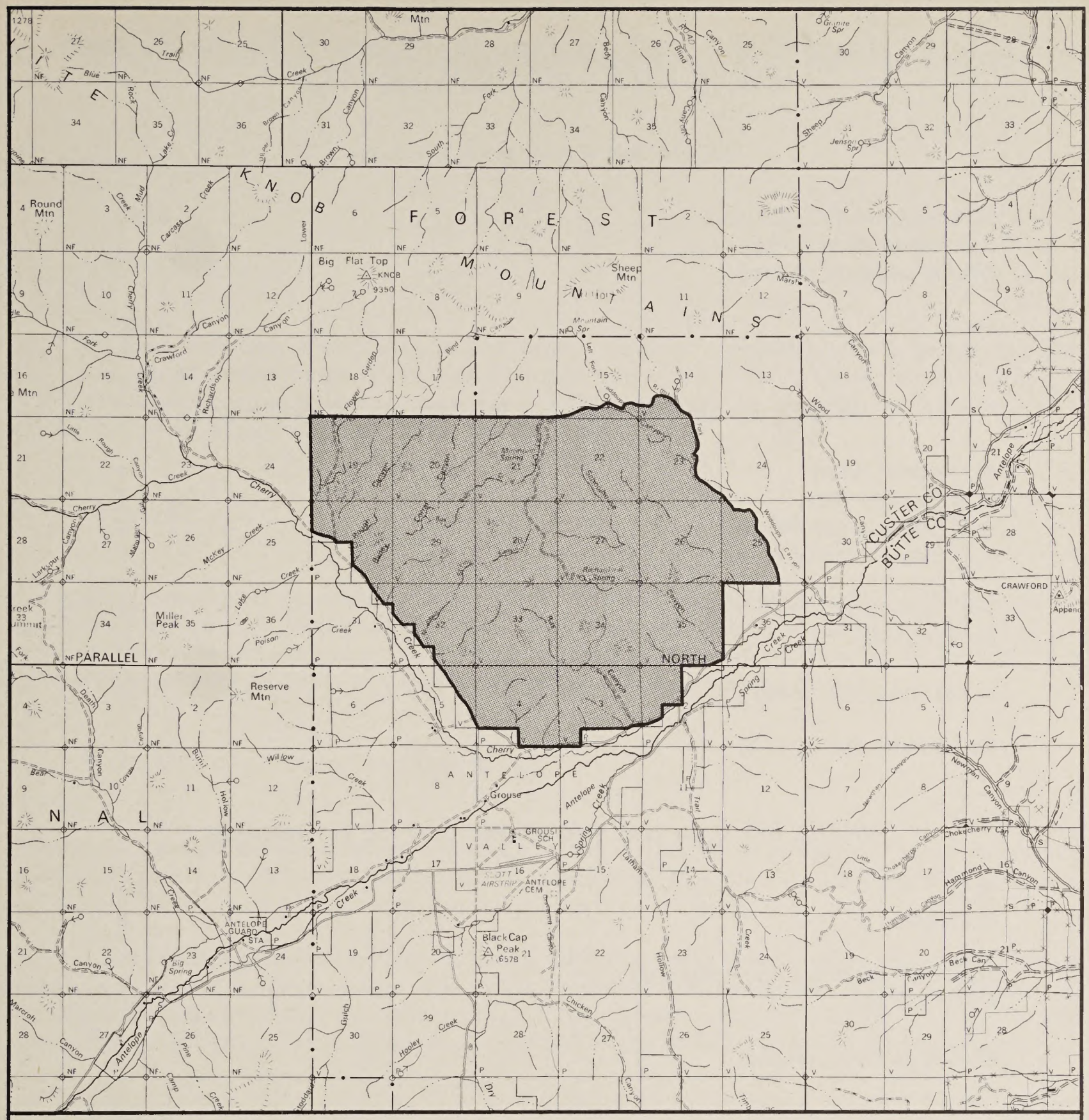
The WSA does not contribute significant solitude and primitive recreation opportunities in an area of Idaho already abundant in wilderness experiences. The WSA's opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation are judged to be less than exemplary. Solitude is available but the area is relatively small and will be impacted by vehicle traffic on dead-end roads within the WSA. Primitive recreation opportunities are present but the area lacks significant physical features that attract wilderness users. Other roadless areas and designated wilderness in the nearby mountain ranges offer similar primitive opportunities but are more attractive to recreationists. They include over four million acres of designated wilderness in six areas and more than 400,000 acres in five roadless areas. The roadless areas are located in central Idaho where the WSA is situated.

Motorized recreation use will continue on existing roads and trails and will occur primarily during hunting season. The use amounts to approximately 50 visitor days annually.

The White Knob Mountains WSA possesses the minimum characteristics for wilderness study but difficulties in wilderness management and the trade-offs with other resource uses outweigh the benefits of wilderness designation.

This area has high wildlife values for wintering deer and elk herds. Improvements necessary to enhance wildlife habitat would not be compatible with wilderness values and would not be allowed.

The natural values of White Knob Mountains WSA include scenic mountain and canyon landscapes and existing motorized and nonmotorized recreation uses such as hunting, hiking, sightseeing and camping. These values would be protected through visual management objectives to retain the existing landscape, off-road vehicle designations that restrict motorized use to existing roads and trails, and objectives to maintain and improve big game habitat. These decisions are now pending the wilderness decision and are found in the Big Lost Management Framework Plan.



RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS

RECOMMENDED FOR NONWILDERNESS

LAND OUTSIDE WSA RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS

SPLIT ESTATE

STATE

PRIVATE

N

1 0 1 2 3

Scale in Miles

ID-31-17

WHITE KNOB MOUNTAINS PROPOSAL

NOVEMBER 1988

Table 1 -- Land Status and Acreage Summary of the Study Area
WHITE KNOB MOUNTAINS WSA

Within Wilderness Study Area

BLM (surface and subsurface)	9,950
Split Estate (BLM surface only)	0
Inholdings (state, private)	0
Total	9,950

Within the Recommended Wilderness Boundary

BLM (within WSA)	0
BLM (outside WSA)	0
Split Estate (within WSA)	0
Split Estate (outside WSA)	0
Total BLM Land Recommended for Wilderness	0
Inholdings (state, private)	0
State land (outside WSA)	0

Within the Area Not Recommended for Wilderness

BLM	9,950
Split Estate	0
Total BLM Land Not Recommended for Wilderness	9,950
Inholdings (state, private)	0

3. Criteria Considered in Developing the Wilderness Recommendations

Wilderness Characteristics

A. Naturalness

The White Knob Mountains WSA contains human-caused imprints but essentially retains its natural character. The most apparent changes to the WSA's natural character are vehicle roads and trails and reservoirs. The WSA's good topographic screening tends to decrease the effect of the impacts; however, most of the impacts are concentrated along routes a wilderness visitor would normally travel.

B. Solitude

Outstanding opportunities for solitude exist within the White Knob Mountains WSA. However, similar opportunities exist in many nearby areas. While steep topography, numerous canyons and variety of tall vegetation screens visitors from each other, outside influences such as motorized vehicle disturbances along cherry-stem roads and outside the area have an affect on the quality of solitude.

C. Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

Primitive and unconfined recreational opportunities qualified the area for further study but are not considered to merit inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System. Opportunities exist in the WSA for hiking, backpacking, hunting, wildlife observation, photography, climbing and sightseeing.

The area lacks significant physical features that attract wilderness users. Other roadless areas and designated wilderness in nearby mountain ranges offer similar primitive opportunities but are more attractive to recreationists. They include over four million acres of designated wilderness in six areas and more than 400,000 acres in five roadless areas. The roadless areas are located in central Idaho where the WSA is situated.

D. Special Features

Wildlife habitat is the area's most important special feature. Habitat for mule deer and elk is present within the WSA but is not unusual or more important than that on nearby lands.

Diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System

A. Assessing the Diversity of Natural Systems and Features as Represented by Ecosystems

The White Knob Mountains WSA is located in the Rocky Mountain Forest Province/Sagebrush Steppe Ecosystem. Wilderness designation of this WSA would not add a new ecosystem to the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS). This ecosystem is represented by four designated areas with 76,129 acres. There are eight other BLM study areas in the state under study with this ecosystem. This information is summarized on Table 2.

TABLE 2

Ecosystem Representation

Bailey-Kuchler Classification	NWPS Areas areas	NWPS Areas acres	Other BLM Studies areas	Other BLM Studies acres
Rocky Mountain Forest Province				
		NATIONWIDE		
Sagebrush Steppe Ecosystem	4	76,129	23	247,843
		IDAHO		
Sagebrush Steppe Ecosystem	0	0	8	162,710

B. Expanding the Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive Recreation Within a Day's Driving Time (Five Hours) of Major Population Centers

The White Knob Mountain WSA is within a five-hour drive from Boise, Idaho. Table 3 summarizes the number and acreage of designated areas and other BLM study areas within a five-hour drive of the population center.

Table 3

Wilderness Opportunities for Residents of Major Population Centers

Population Centers	NWPS Areas		Other BLM Studies	
	areas	acres	areas	acres
Boise, Idaho	16	4,741,570	141	5,374,250

C. Balancing the Geographic Distribution of Wilderness Areas

Idaho has the largest wilderness area in the contiguous 48 states, the 2.2 million acre Frank Church - River of No Return Wilderness. Designation of White Knob Mountains WSA would not help balance geographic distribution of wilderness.

Manageability

Effective wilderness Management of the WSA would be difficult. There are seven vehicle access points that enter the area on the west, south and east. Access routes or vehicle trails extend into the WSA from one to two miles. Closing these trails would be difficult because natural barriers for blocking access are lacking.

Over 60 percent of the WSA is bordered by private, state and U.S. Forest Service lands. These boundaries are difficult to physically locate and define on the ground which would lead to uses that would not be compatible with wilderness management. The Waddoups Canyon Road forms most of the WSA's eastern boundary and nearly bisects the WSA. The presence of vehicles on the road limits BLM's ability to maintain high quality opportunities for solitude. It would also be difficult to restrict vehicles to the road surface because of the general openness of the WSA's interior lands. Therefore, it would be difficult to effectively manage the WSA as wilderness over the long term.

Energy and Minerals Resource Values

A Geology, Energy and Mineral (GEM) assessment report was prepared for the White Knob Mountains WSA in 1983 (Geoexplorers International, Inc., 1983). Conclusions from the report are:

> The White Knob Mountains WSA has been classified as having moderate favorability for oil and gas. The basis of this classification is the structural setting of the WSA including excellent potential for the development of traps, indications of subsurface structures from private geophysical data, the presence of potential hydrocarbon sources and reservoir beds in the stratigraphic section and a favorable thermal history of the source rocks. All of the WSA except the southernmost portion is covered by oil and gas leases granted after 1976 or by lease application. All of the WSA is classified as being unfavorable for geothermal resources. This is based on analogy with similar areas within the Idaho Basin and Range geothermal province. Negative factors include generally high elevations and an absences of major faults or lineaments.
>
> All of the WSA is classified as having low favorability for other leasable resources including phosphate, bitumen and asphalt. The lack of known occurrences and the generally unfavorable geologic environment of the WSA leads to the low classification.
>
> The WSA is rated low-to-moderate favorability for metallic metals including lead, zinc, silver and copper. Two groups of lode mining claims held involve lands within the eastern portion of the WSA. Of the twelve total claims, only one prospect has been developed. Assay work done in 1981 revealed silver, copper and titanium.
>
> Lastly, the WSA is classified as having moderate favorability for common varieties of limestone. The dominance of carbonate rocks in the stratigraphic section provides the basis of this classification.

Impacts on Resources

The comparative impact table on the following page summarizes the effects on pertinent resources for all the alternatives considered including designation or nondesignation of the entire White Knob Mountains WSA area as wilderness.

Table 4
Comparative Summary of the Impacts by Alternative
WSA ID-31-17 (WHITE KNOB MOUNTAINS)

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	PROPOSED ACTION (NO WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE)	ALL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE
Impacts on Wilderness Values	Naturalness and solitude lost or impaired on 980 acres. No legal protection of wilderness values on 9,950 acres.	Wilderness values retained on 9,950 acres. Impacts to solitude and naturalness would not occur on 980 acres.
Impacts to Energy and Mineral Development	No Impact. There are 9,950 acres open to mineral entry and leasing.	Subject to valid existing rights on 9,950 acres of oil and gas leases, the WSA would be withdrawn from location and leasing. Withdrawal will not impact exploration because of low potential. Wilderness designation would require validity exam on locatable mineral claims.
Impacts to Motorized Recreation Use	No Impact.	Motorized recreation use, amounting to 50 visitor days, would be foregone annually both in the short and long term. Impacts of shifting this use to other public lands would be negligible.

Local Social and Economic Considerations

Wilderness designation would create a minor favorable economic impact because of increased recreation. No significant social effects would occur as a result of wilderness designation of the White Knob Mountains WSA.

Summary of WSA-Specific Public Comments

BLM's wilderness inventory and study were conducted with extensive public participation and public involvement was an important consideration in making wilderness recommendations. BLM solicited public involvement in the study phase through scoping meetings, a 90-day public comment period and two formal hearings on the Big Lost/Pahsimeroi Draft Wilderness EIS. Comments received during the inventory period and EIS scoping efforts were used to develop significant study issues and various alternatives for the ultimate management of those lands found to have wilderness value.

Wilderness was not an issue in the original Big Lost MFP and was not a subject of comments. No comments received during the wilderness inventory were deferred for consideration during the study.

Twelve written comments were received during the Draft EIS comment period that mentioned the White Knob Mountains WSA. Nine comments supported more wilderness than recommended, while three comments indicated a preference for the proposed action of no wilderness.

Seven government agencies provided written responses to the Draft EIS. The Idaho Department of Fish and Game and Idaho Historical Society indicated they had no comment. The U.S. Geological Survey, Federal Aviation Administration, Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of Energy commented that they had no objection to the proposed action (no wilderness) for the WSA. The Idaho Air National Guard did support the proposed action and stated that 1,368 low-level training flights were flown in the vicinity of the WSA. The Guard feels that these missions have a significant impact on solitude in the area and wilderness designation could subject current available airspace to possible reduction which it opposes.

Burnt Creek Wilderness Study Area

1. The Study Area -- 24,980 acres

The Burnt Creek WSA (ID-45-12) is located in Custer County 35 miles northwest of Arco, Idaho. The WSA includes 24,980 acres of BLM lands and 640 acres of state lands (see Table 3). The WSA is bounded on the north and east by numerous unnamed access roads, on the south and west by the Challis National Forest including a common 7.5-mile border with the 116,000 acre RARE II Area Borah Peak which has been recommended suitable for wilderness by the U.S. Forest Service. The WSA consists of open, sloping sagebrush/grass-covered hills on the northern and eastern portions and by steep terrain with scattered pockets of Douglas-fir and juniper on the southern and western portions. Several large rock outcroppings dominate the center and a small lake is nestled in the trees of the southwestern portion of the WSA.

The WSA was studied under Section 603 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) and was included in the Big Lost/Pahsimeroi Final Environmental Impact Statement filed in September 1986. Three alternatives were analyzed in the EIS: an all wilderness alternative; a partial wilderness alternative where 8,300 acres would be designated as wilderness and 16,680 acres would be released for uses other than wilderness, which is the recommendation of this report; and a no wilderness option (the recommendation of the Final EIS). This recommendation was based on the preliminary information that the adjacent RARE II Study Area Borah Peak was going to be recommended as nonsuitable. However, the U.S. Forest Service did recommend the Borah Peak II Area as suitable. Based on the change in recommendation by the U.S. Forest Service, part of the WSA is now recommended for wilderness.

2. Recommendation and Rationale

8,300 acres recommended for wilderness

16,680 acres recommended for nonwilderness

The recommendation for the Burnt Creek WSA is to designate 8,300 acres as wilderness and release 16,680 acres for other uses. The environmentally preferable alternative is the all wilderness alternative with acquisitions. It would cause the least change from the natural environment over the long term. The recommendation would use all practical means to avoid or minimize adverse environmental impacts. The 8,300 acres of federal land within the WSA recommended for wilderness and the 16,680 acres recommended for nonwilderness are shown on the Burnt Creek Proposal map.

The 8,300 acres were recommended for wilderness based on their outstanding wilderness quality, lack of conflicts with other resource uses, ease of management and their value as an extension to the adjacent U.S. Forest Service RARE II Unit.

The recommendation includes the most natural parts of the WSA, containing only 2.5 miles of vehicle way.

The portion of the WSA recommended for wilderness offers outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive, unconfined recreation. This portion is extremely hilly and steep. The openness of the hilltops creates vistas. The area recommended is isolated from human influences that occur on the adjacent nonrecommended portion and is not evident to the visitor since the timber stands on the north-facing hill slopes screen out the cherry-stem roads that exist to the north.

The adjacent 116,000 acre proposed Borah Peak RARE II Area that lies to the southwest is spectacular. It gives the visitor the feeling of approaching the "top of the world" which seems to spread out as far as the eye can see (the recommended portion of the WSA shares a 7.5-mile border with the U.S. Forest Service wilderness proposal). The naturalness of the Burnt Creek recommended area is also outstanding. The primitive nature of the recommended area adds a spectacular example of sagebrush- and grass-covered hills with pockets of timber giving way to awesome rugged mountains rising into the adjacent RARE II Area. Both areas are dominated by the 12,655-foot Borah Peak, the highest point in Idaho.

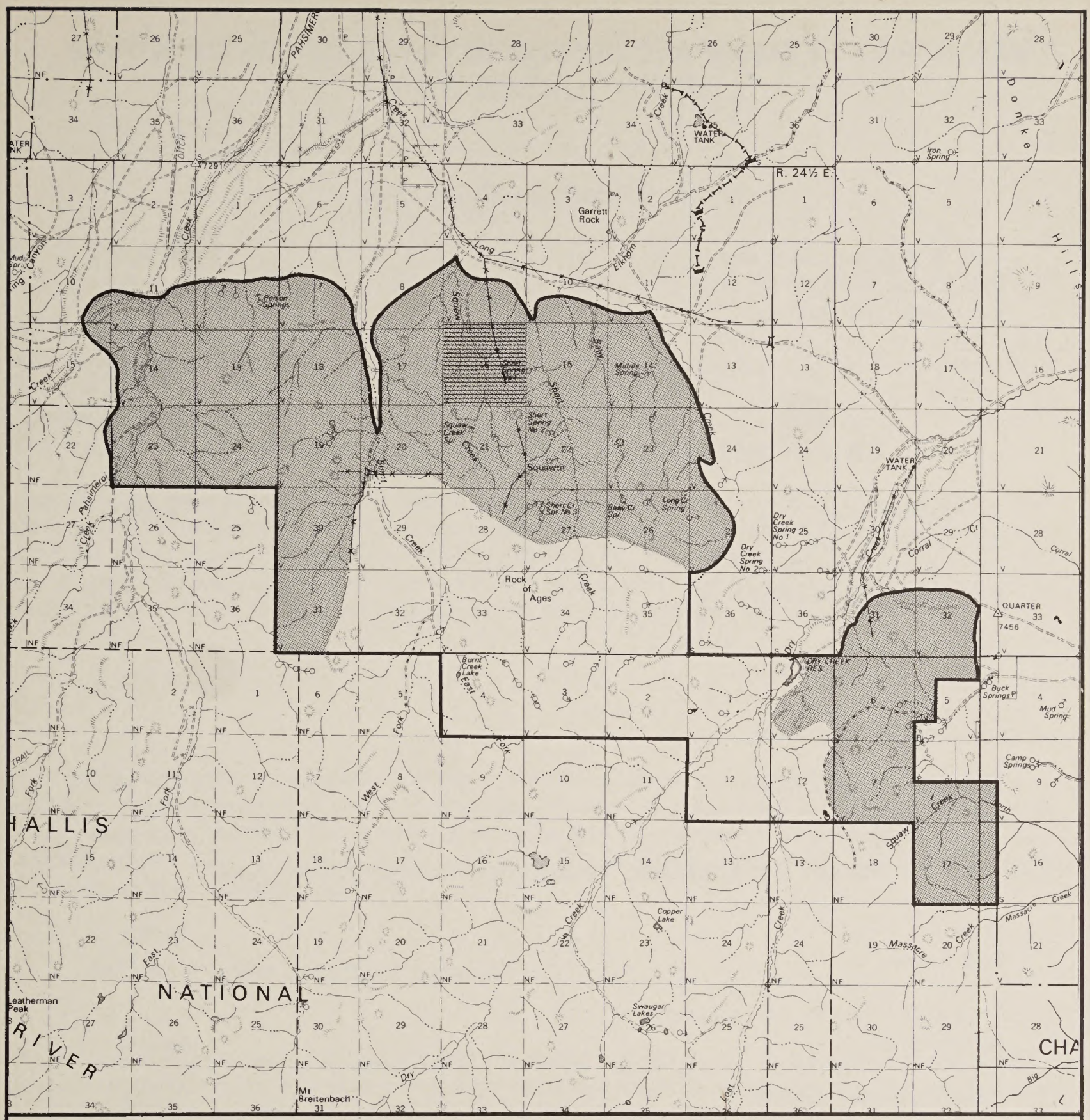
A small part of the area recommended for wilderness contains an area rated by the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) and Bureau of Mines (BM) as having high occurrence potential for cement-grade limestone. This area is located in part of the WSA with high wilderness values along the east fork of Burnt Creek and is an important physiographic link with the U.S. Forest Service area recommended for wilderness.

The areas that are not recommended as suitable are predominantly natural with few human imprints. However, the opportunities for solitude and primitive, unconfined recreation are not rated as outstanding. Use occurring on boundary and cherry-stem roads and the lack of vegetative screening is evident to the visitor.

The general character of the nonrecommended areas is open sagebrush and grass and rolling hills similar to thousands of acres of adjacent lands. While much of the area would be an extension of the adjacent RARE II lands, they are not of the same high quality. These areas are closer to off-site activities. Administrative costs would be higher due to the need to construct fencing to adequately control off-road vehicle use. Construction of fences would further degrade the wilderness values by lessening the visitor's perception of solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation.

Outside the southeastern edge of the Burnt Creek WSA, portions of the lower Dry Creek drainage have many roads and there is evidence of an old reservoir and breached dam. The obviousness of a large water diversion project outside the WSA lessens the visitor's perception of naturalness and significantly lowers the feeling of solitude. These visual intrusions, when combined with eight miles of unimproved vehicle ways, reduce the overall natural quality of this part of the WSA.

In the area not recommended for wilderness, the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) and Bureau of Mines (BM) identified four areas with high occurrence potential for cement-grade limestone. While there is presently no demand for nor interest in these deposits, the recommendation would allow for future use of the resource.



RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS

RECOMMENDED FOR NONWILDERNESS

LAND OUTSIDE WSA RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS

SPLIT ESTATE

STATE

PRIVATE

1 0 1 2 3

Scale in Miles

ID-45-12
BURNT CREEK
PROPOSAL

NOVEMBER 1988

Table 1 -- Land Status and Acreage Summary of the Study Area
BURNT CREEK WSA

Within Wilderness Study Area

BLM (surface and subsurface)	24,980
Split Estate (BLM surface only)	0
Inholdings (state, private)	640
Total	25,620

Within the Recommended Wilderness Boundary

BLM (within WSA)	8,300
BLM (outside WSA)	0
Split Estate (within WSA)	0
Split Estate (outside WSA)	0
Total BLM Land Recommended for Wilderness	8,300
Inholdings (state, private)	0
State land (outside WSA)	0

Within the Area Not Recommended for Wilderness

BLM	16,680
Split Estate	0
Total BLM Land Not Recommended for Wilderness	16,680
Inholdings (state, private)	640

3. Criteria Considered in Developing the Wilderness Recommendations

Wilderness Characteristics

A. Naturalness

The Burnt Creek WSA is predominantly natural with some evidence of human imprints. In the 8,300 acre portion recommended for wilderness the naturalness was rated as outstanding. This portion, in the central part of the WSA, has extremely steep hills and most of the sights and sounds of man are not evident or are screened out by the vegetative cover. On the south side, the WSA shares a 7.5-mile common border with the RARE II Area Borah Peak, which has also been recommended for wilderness.

Conversely, the areas to the north and southeast which have not been recommended have two cherry-stem roads and two boundary roads which cut three parallel visual corridors allowing the sights and sounds of man to intrude deeply into this portion of the WSA. Eight miles of vehicle ways on the eastern side of the WSA also degrade the natural feeling while a breached dam, old reservoir and a large water diversion project just outside the WSA lessen the perception of naturalness on the southeastern side of the WSA.

B. Solitude

Outstanding opportunities for solitude exist due to the WSA's large size, topographic relief, moderate vegetation screening and lack of nearby development. However, in the portions not recommended, vehicle use of Burnt Creek and Short Creek cherry-stems and nearby Long Creek and Dry Creek roads significantly lessen the opportunities for solitude on the adjacent wilderness lands by creating two vehicle corridors going approximately three miles into the WSA.

C. Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

The WSA does offer opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation. In the recommended portion these opportunities are rated as outstanding. Opportunities include hiking, horseback riding, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, camping and backpacking.

D. Special Features

The WSA lacks any significant feature which would be considered a focal or destination point for visitors inside the WSA. However, the adjacent RARE II Area offers as a focal point the 12,655-foot Borah Peak, the highest point in Idaho.

Diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System

A. Assessing the Diversity of Natural Systems and Features as Represented by Ecosystems

Wilderness designation of the Burnt Creek WSA would not add a new ecosystem or landform to the NWPS. The Burnt Creek WSA represents the Rocky Mountain Forest Province/Western Spruce Fir Forest ecosystem. This ecosystem is represented in the nearby Frank Church - River of No Return Wilderness and Sawtooth Wilderness and by 41 areas with 4,756,981 acres. There are two other BLM areas in the state under study with this ecosystem. This information is summarized on Table 2.

TABLE 2

Ecosystem Representation

Bailey-Kuchler Classification	NWPS Areas areas	NWPS Areas acres	Other BLM Studies areas	Other BLM Studies acres
Rocky Mountain Forest Province				
		NATIONWIDE		
Western Spruce Fir Forest Ecosystem	41	4,756,981	9	64,171
		IDAHO		
Western Spruce Fir Forest Ecosystem	2	26,910	7	37,261

B. Expanding the Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive Recreation Within a Day's Driving Time (Five Hours) of Major Population Centers

The Burnt Creek WSA is within a five-hour drive from Boise, Idaho. Table 3 summarizes the number and acreage of designated areas and other BLM study areas within a five-hour drive of the population center.

Table 3

Wilderness Opportunities for Residents of Major Population Centers

Population Centers	NWPS Areas		Other BLM Studies	
	areas	acres	areas	acres
Boise, Idaho	16	4,741,570	141	5,374,250

C. Balancing the Geographic Distribution of Wilderness Areas

The Burnt Creek WSA would not contribute to balancing the geographic distribution of areas within the NWPS but would further concentrate wilderness areas in Idaho. Idaho has the largest wilderness area in the contiguous 48 states, the 2.2 million acre Frank Church - River of No Return Wilderness.

Manageability

The WSA could be managed as wilderness, especially the recommended portion that abuts the RARE II Area Borah Peak. Its steep hills create an obvious identifiable boundary for the visitor on the north side. The west side, although not as clearly definable, is rugged and inaccessible to ORVs. However, the east side boundary abuts the Log Creek Road and the gentle terrain of the Dry Creek drainage. Strategically placed fencing and patrolling would be necessary to protect the wilderness values within.

In the area not recommended for wilderness, there would be administrative costs associated with the numerous cherry-stem roads, access points, many miles of fence and signing. Constant patrolling would be necessary to eliminate vehicle use. While present vehicle use is not a management problem in a nonwilderness environment, it would be a significant problem to a designated wilderness. In addition, there is one 640 acre state section within the WSA. Presently, only grazing use is projected but access would have to be provided upon request.

Energy and Minerals Resource Values

A joint U.S. Geological Service and Bureau of Mines mineral resource assessment of the Burnt Creek WSA was completed in 1988. The findings of that assessment are the area has no identified mineral or energy resources and that a high potential for undiscovered resources of high calcium limestone suitable for the manufacture of Portland cement is present in four small areas in the southeastern and southwestern parts of the study area. A large portion of this area was recommended not suitable for wilderness. The entire wilderness study area has low resource potential for undiscovered metals, oil and gas and geothermal energy. The potential for oil and gas is considered low because possible source and reservoir rocks in the study area have been heated above 180°C. Therefore, liquid hydrocarbons have been destroyed. The resource potential for dry gas is considered low because abundant cenozoic faults in the region probably have breached any favorable mesozoic traps that might have been present. The potential for geothermal is considered low because no hot springs or other geothermal indicators are present in or near the area. The Burnt Creek WSA is classified as having low favorability for the accumulation of saleable resources based on limited direct evidence. A few small areas of glacial and alluvial material are mapped but similar deposits are much more extensive and more accessible elsewhere.

Impacts on Resources

The following comparative impact table summarizes the effects on pertinent resources for all alternatives considered including designation or nondesignation of the entire area as wilderness.

Table 4
Comparative Summary of the Impacts by Alternative
WSA ID-45-12 (BURNT CREEK)

ISSUE TOPICS	PROPOSED ACTION (PARTIAL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE)	ALL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE	NO WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE
Impacts on Wilderness Values	Wilderness values retained on 8,300 acres; no legal protection on 16,680 acres. Naturalness and solitude lost or impaired on 975 acres.	Wilderness values retained on 24,980 acres. Impacts to solitude and naturalness would not occur on 975 acres.	Naturalness and solitude lost or impaired on 975 acres; no legal protection of wilderness values on 24,980 acres.
Impacts on Mineral Resources	There are 16,680 acres open to mineral entry and leasing. There are 8,300 acres closed to mineral entry and leasing.	There are 24,980 acres closed to mineral entry and leasing.	There are 24,980 acres open to mineral entry and leasing.
Impacts on Motorized Recreation	35 visitor days annually displaced from 8,300 acres closed to ORV use; insignificant impact due to similar or superior opportunities on nearby public land. ORV use limited to existing roads and ways on 16,680 acres.	100 visitor days annually displaced from 24,980 acres closed to ORV use; insignificant impact due to similar or superior opportunities on nearby public land.	Very minor increase in vehicle accessibility; no significant impacts. ORVs limited to existing roads and ways on 24,980 acres.

Local Social and Economic Considerations

The social and economic factors were not considered a significant issue in the study.

Summary of WSA-Specific Public Comments

During formal public review of the Draft EIS, 17 written comments were received, 16 specifically addressing the Burnt Creek WSA. Public hearings were held at Arco and Challis, Idaho. No individuals testified at either public hearing.

Of the 16 specific comments received, ten comments favored wilderness designation for all or part of the WSA. Four commenters opposed wilderness designation for all of the WSA and two took no position toward wilderness designation.

Those favoring wilderness commented on the beauty of the area, its enhancement of the adjacent RARE II Borah Peak Unit which has been recommended for wilderness and its enhancement of wilderness opportunities in Idaho.

Those opposing designation were concerned that wilderness would eliminate use by small children and most of the elderly. Others were concerned that designation would eliminate development for oil and gas leases.

The U.S. Geological Survey, Federal Aviation Agency, the Environmental Protection Agency, Department of Energy, Idaho Department of Fish and Game, Idaho State Historic Preservation Office and the Idaho Air National Guard all commented on the Draft EIS. The Idaho Department of Fish and Game supported the all wilderness alternative while the Idaho Air National Guard opposed designation. The other agencies did not identify a specific conflict with any of the alternatives.

SUMMARY ANALYSIS OF SPECIFIC WSA RECOMMENDATIONS

CHALLIS WILDERNESS

CHALLIS WILDERNESS

SALMON DISTRICT

LEMHI RESOURCE AREA

CHALLIS RESOURCE AREA

RESOURCE AREA 1

3

2

0 10 20 30 40 50

Scale in Miles

LEGEND

DISTRICT BOUNDARY

RESOURCE AREA BOUNDARY

WILDERNESS STUDY AREA

CHALLIS

1. Corral-Horse Basin
2. Jerry Peak
3. Jerry Peak West

Corral-Horse Basin Wilderness Study Area

1. The Study Area -- 48,500 acres

The Corral-Horse Basin WSA (ID-46-11) is located in Custer County 20 miles south of Challis, Idaho. The WSA includes 48,500 acres of BLM lands and 1,280 acres of state land inholdings (see Table 1). The WSA is roughly bounded on the north by Spar Canyon, on the west by the East Fork of the Salmon Road, on the south by Road Creek and on the east by Dry Gulch Road.

The WSA is composed of rolling hills surrounding Corral and Horse Basins. Anderson Peak, at 9,342 feet, dominates the WSA. The vegetation is predominantly sagebrush and grass with stringers of timber on stream, sideslopes and bottoms. There is one large stand of Douglas-fir on the east slope of Anderson Peak.

The WSA was studied under Section 603 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) and was included in the Challis Management Framework Plan Amendment/Final Environmental Impact Statement finalized in September 1986. Three alternatives were analyzed in the EIS: an all wilderness alternative; a partial wilderness alternative where 42,225 acres would be designated as wilderness and 6,275 acres would be released for uses other than wilderness; and a no wilderness alternative, which is the recommendation of this report.

2. Recommendation and Rationale

0 acres recommended for wilderness

48,500 acres recommended for nonwilderness

The recommendation is to not designate the Coral-Horse Basin WSA as wilderness and release the area for uses other than wilderness. The environmentally preferable alternative is the all wilderness alternative. It would cause the least change from the natural environment over the long term. The recommendation would use all practical means to avoid or minimize adverse environmental impacts. The entire 48,500 acres of federal land are shown on the Corral-Horse Basin Proposal map.

The quality of the wilderness values was the key consideration in the recommendation. While the WSA contains the wilderness values necessary for study, they are not considered to merit inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System. The WSA generally appears natural, but there are several site-specific signs of humans, primarily rangeland developments, which impact naturalness locally. Solitude opportunities available in the WSA are similar to those afforded by the thousands of acres of land adjacent to the WSA. These opportunities are due to the remoteness and lack of human activity in the area and are not due to any intrinsic values unique to the WSA.

Since there is little vegetative screening on the gently rolling hills, the sights and sounds of boundary roads are apparent from much of the WSA. This, combined with almost no natural barriers, makes the area susceptible to off-road vehicle use. Constant patrolling and fencing of the associated roads would be necessary to eliminate ORV use of this area.

The WSA does offer outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation, but the area is not a popular destination area and its values are similar to those available in thousands of adjacent acres and not unique to the WSA. There are no significant wildlife species or habitats, geologic features or scientific and educational values in the area that would benefit from wilderness designation. Wild horse management would be negatively affected by designation of this WSA. Use of helicopters and construction of horse-gathering facilities would not be allowed. The existing horse trap at Anderson Ranch, consisting of wire fences and runways, would be relocated to a less effective and desirable location after wilderness designation. Alternative methods of gathering and management of the herd have been initiated in previous years and were proven to be ineffective and uneconomical. If the facilities were allowed to stay in place, they would detract from the naturalness of the area.

There are 1,280 acres of state land inholdings, one section in the center of the WSA. If this land could not be acquired and access was requested, it would impact the ability to manage parts of the WSA as wilderness.

A treaty signed with the Shoshone-Bannock Indian Tribe allows the tribe members " . . . the right, without any charge therefore to cut timber for their own use, but not for sale and pasture their livestock on said public lands, and to hunt thereon and fish in the streams thereof." To date, the Shoshone-Bannock Tribe has not opted to exercise this right. Any request would be honored. Cutting timber is not compatible with wilderness designation and would degrade the area's naturalness and impact opportunities for solitude.

Currently, there is little threat to the existing naturalness of the area. There are no known or projected activities and there is no known mineral potential. Therefore, even without wilderness designation, the quality and level of values now found in the WSA are not expected to significantly change.

ID-46-11
CORRAL–HORSE BASIN
PROPOSAL

FEBRUARY 1988

Table 1 -- Land Status and Acreage Summary of the Study Area
CORRAL-HORSE BASIN

Within Wilderness Study Area

BLM (surface and subsurface)	48,500
Split Estate (BLM surface only)	0
Inholdings (state, private)	1,280
Total	49,780

Within the Recommended Wilderness Boundary

BLM (within WSA)	0
BLM (outside WSA)	0
Split Estate (within WSA)	0
Split Estate (outside WSA)	0
Total BLM Land Recommended for Wilderness	0
Inholdings (state, private)	0
State land (outside WSA)	0

Within the Area Not Recommended for Wilderness

BLM	48,500
Split Estate	0
Total BLM Land Not Recommended for Wilderness	48,500
Inholdings (state, private)	1,280

3. Criteria Considered in Developing the Wilderness Recommendations

Wilderness Characteristics

A. Naturalness

The Corral-Horse Basin WSA presents the visitor with a general appearance of naturalness. The area is composed of rolling hills surrounding Corral and Horse Basins. Anderson Peak, at 9,342, feet is the highest point in the WSA. Although there is scattered timber along the stream bottoms and one large Douglas-fir stand on the east side, the dominant vegetative type is sagebrush and grass.

The majority of human imprints are grazing activities, fences and waterhole improvements. These imprints are not considered to be major impacts to naturalness and tend to blend into the landscape when viewed from more than .5 mile. Impacts to the natural appearance of the WSA consist of two cherry-stem roads which penetrate the boundaries for six miles and two vehicle ways transversing the WSA on the east. These impacts lessen the natural and scenic wilderness experience. The horse trap at Anderson Ranch is an important activity that impacts the WSA. The wing fences and runways extend from the trap into the WSA. These facilities are apparent to the visitor and lessen the naturalness of the area.

B. Solitude

The Corral-Horse Basin WSA's solitude potential was not rated as outstanding. Much of the WSA is comprised of rolling hills separating wide basins. Solitude opportunities are primarily due to the WSA's size. Due to the lack of vegetative screening and the general openness of the terrain, the outside sights and sounds, present in the form of cherry-stem and bordering roads and private ranches, detract from the user's experience. They are not imposing but do lessen the feeling of solitude. The rolling terrain of the WSA attracts ORV enthusiasts and also lessens the feeling of solitude in the WSA.

C. Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

The Corral-Horse Basin WSA, with its relatively large size, lack of man-made or natural barriers and its lack of developments in or near the area, contains outstanding opportunities for a primitive and unconfined type of recreation. The rolling hills and wide basins, with Anderson Peak in the background, provide opportunities for hiking, backpacking, fishing, hunting, horseback riding, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, photography, bird-watching and sightseeing. The general lack of barriers and the gently rolling terrain encourage off-road vehicle use, especially in the fall.

D. Special Features

The Corral-Horse Basin WSA is part of the Challis Wild Horse Range and offers excellent wild horse viewing. The wild horses are an introduced element in the WSA. Except for the gathering facilities near Anderson Ranch, the wild horses presently add to the area.

Diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System

A. Assessing the Diversity of Natural Systems and Features as Represented by Ecosystems

Wilderness designation of the Corral-Horse Basin WSA would add an ecosystem not presently represented in Idaho. However, this ecosystem is represented in the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS) by four designated areas with 76,129 acres. There are eight BLM areas in the state under study with this ecosystem. This is summarized in Table 2.

TABLE 2

Ecosystem Representation

Bailey-Kuchler Classification	NWPS Areas areas	NWPS Areas acres	Other BLM Studies areas	Other BLM Studies acres
Rocky Mountain Forest Province				
		NATIONWIDE		
Sagebrush Steppe Ecosystem	4	76,129	23	247,843
		IDAHO		
Sagebrush Steppe Ecosystem	0	0	8	162,710

B. Expanding the Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive Recreation Within a Day's Driving Time (Five Hours) of Major Population Centers

The Corral-Horse Basin WSA is within a five-hour drive from Boise, Idaho. Table 3 summarizes the number and acreage of designated areas and other BLM study areas within a five-hour drive of the population center.

Table 3

Wilderness Opportunities for Residents of Major Population Centers

Population Centers	NWPS Areas		Other BLM Studies	
	areas	acres	areas	acres
Boise, Idaho	16	4,741,570	141	5,374,250

C. Balancing the Geographic Distribution of Wilderness Areas

Wilderness designation of the Corral-Horse Basin WSA would not contribute to balancing the geographic distribution of areas within the NWPS.

Manageability

The WSA could be managed as wilderness. However, due to the numerous vehicle access points and rolling terrain, many miles of fence, signing and constant patrolling would be necessary to effectively eliminate vehicle use. While present vehicle use is not an administrative problem in a nonwilderness environment, it would be a significant problem in a designated wilderness.

Two identifiable mining claims are located on the northern edge of the WSA and have not yet been noticeably prospected. The claimants have expressed their belief that the area has high potential for discovery of precious metals. Should the claimants begin development, wilderness characteristics would be impacted over the entire northeast corner.

The Shoshone and Bannock Indians of the Fort Hall Reservation, Idaho, through the Treaty of Fort Bridger on July 3, 1868, and ratified by the United States Senate on February 16, 1869, ceded lands to the United States. A follow-up agreement with the Shoshone and Bannock Indians, concluded February 5, 1898, ratified June 6, 1900 (31 Stat. 672), in Article IV of the Act to ratify the agreement (31 Stat. 674), states as follows:

> "So long as any of the lands ceded, granted, and relinquished under this treaty remain part of the public domain, Indians belonging to the above-mentioned tribes, and living on the reduced reservation, shall have the right, without any charge therefor, to cut timber for their own use, but not for sale, and pasture their livestock on said public lands, and to hunt thereon and fish in the streams thereof."

Although the Tribe has not claimed this right, a request would be honored. Cutting timber is not compatible with wilderness designation and this activity would degrade the naturalness of the area and impact opportunities for solitude. This applies to all of the WSA. To date, the Shoshone-Bannock Tribe has not opted to exercise this right. Should the Tribe pursue this option, the Bureau would be hard pressed to mitigate any impacts. These rights continue to exist on all of the WSA.

The 1,280 acres of state lands within the WSA should be acquired. If these lands are not acquired, motor vehicle access could not be denied.

Energy and Minerals Resource Values

Mineral assessments for the Corral-Horse Basin WSA were prepared by the BLM in 1979 (and updated in 1988). Conclusions from this report are:

> The majority of the area has low potential for minerals. Two claim groups in the northwest and northeast of the WSA were staked in 1987 by ASARCO. ASARCO, in comments on the Draft EIS, indicated its belief that the Corral-Horse Basin WSA has potential for the discovery of copper, gold, molybdenum and uranium.

Salable minerals include sand and gravel, borrow and fill and building stone. The area has very little high-quality sand and gravel.

According to the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), the area has no value for geothermal resources. It is not included in the "lands valuable prospectively for geothermal resources" as depicted on the USGS geothermal resources map (February 1977 update). BLM's Unit Resource Analysis (URA) indicates the area within Ranges 20 and 21 East may have undiscovered oil and gas resources. Geologically, this area is underlain by thick sediments that could contain oil and gas. One lessee has indicated that vibroeseis seismic work in areas adjacent to the Corral-Horse Basin WSA indicated that conditions exist for the possible accumulation of hydrocarbons.

Impacts on Resources

The comparative impact table on the following page summarizes the effects on pertinent resources for all alternatives considered including designation or nondesignation of the entire area as wilderness.

Table 4
Comparative Summary of the Impacts by Alternative
WSA ID-46-11 (CORRAL-HORSE BASIN)

ISSUE TOPICS	PROPOSED ACTION (NO WILDERNESS ACTION)	ALL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE	PARTIAL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE
Impacts on Wilderness Values	Loss of wilderness values on 4,365 acres (9% of WSA). 44,135 acres subject to loss of values but no adverse activities are anticipated within the next 10 years.	Wilderness values would be preserved on all 48,500 acres.	Wilderness values would be maintained on 34,225 acres, lost on 8,010 acres and subject to loss on 6,265 acres.
Impacts on Development of Energy and Mineral Resources	48,500 acres open to mineral entry and leasing. 140 acres would be disturbed due to mining claim and/or oil and gas lease development.	48,500 acres closed to mineral entry and leasing. No surface acres disturbed due to formal withdrawal from entry.	6,275 acres open and 42,225 acres closed to mineral entry or leasing. No surface disturbance of open areas anticipated for the next 20 years.
Impacts on Timber Harvesting	Harvest of 4.9 MMBF of commercial timber could occur requiring 7 miles of new road and disturbing 675 acres.	Harvest of 4.9 MMBF of commercial timber would be foregone. Heavier use of other lands would be required to meet allowable cut goals.	Same as All Wilderness Alternative.
Impacts on Water Quality in the East Fork of the Salmon River	2% degradation in water quality due to increased sedimentation.	Minimal (less than 1%) benefit through revegetation of jeep trails and elimination of vehicle use.	Same as All Wilderness Alternative.
Impacts on East Fork of the Salmon Anadromous Fishery	2% loss of salmon fisheries to reduced water quality.	Slight improvement (less than 1%) to 100% reduction in vehicle use.	Slight improvement (less than 1%) due to 80% reduction in vehicle use.
Impacts on Recreational ORV Use	No displacement of ORV users.	100% reduction in use. 500 visitor days displaced annually by closure to vehicle use. This use can easily transfer to other areas; not a significant impact.	80% reduction in potential use. 400 visitor days displaced annually by closure to vehicle use. This use can easily transfer to other areas; not a significant impact.

Local Social and Economic Considerations

The social and economic factors were not considered a significant issue in the study.

Summary of WSA-Specific Public Comments

Wilderness was not an issue in the original Challis MFP and was not a subject of comments. No comments received during the wilderness inventory were deferred for consideration during the study.

Nineteen of the comments received during the Draft EIS comment period or at the public hearing specifically mentioned the Corral-Horse Basin WSA. Seven commenters supported the recommendation of nonsuitable. Of these seven, four simply agreed with the recommendation, one noted existing vehicle/recreation use, one cited too much existing wilderness in Idaho and one noted potential energy and mineral resources. Three other comments recommended a "no action" alternative or a new study since they felt the energy and mineral resource values quality standard cannot be met. These are considered as additional no wilderness comments.

Nine commenters urged BLM to review the no wilderness recommendation and change it to a wilderness recommendation. These commenters felt that the solitude was outstanding and that important wildlife and recreational values would be protected.

One government agency comment specifically mentioned the WSA. The Soil Conservation Service, USDA, agreed with the nonsuitable recommendation.

Jerry Peak Wilderness Study Area

1. The Study Area -- 46,150 acres

The Jerry Peak WSA (ID-46-14) is located in Custer County 20 miles south of Challis, Idaho. The WSA includes 46,150 acres of BLM lands and 640 acres of state land inholdings (see Table 1). The WSA is roughly bounded on the west by the East Fork Road, on the north by Road Creek Road, on the east by Pecks Canyon Road and on the south by the Challis National Forest. The WSA lies adjacent to the Jerry Peak West WSA and the Corral-Horse Basin WSA.

The WSA is composed of rolling hills with sagebrush and grass the dominant vegetation on the northern half. The southern half of the WSA consists of steeper terrain of a more mountainous nature culminating with 10,010-foot Jerry Peak. The sagebrush and grass on the lower elevations give way to lodgepole and limber pine on the upper elevations. Large areas of timber occur in the upper reaches of Bear, Mosquito, Sage and Lake Creeks. Herd Lake, located in the southwestern portion of the WSA, is popular for both fishing and sightseeing.

The WSA was studied under Section 603 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) and was included in the Challis Management Framework Plan Amendment/Final Environmental Impact Statement finalized in September 1986. Five alternatives were analyzed in the EIS: an all wilderness alternative, a no wilderness alternative and three partial wilderness alternatives. The partial alternatives considered wilderness designations of 41,690, 36,650 and 26,750 acres, respectively. The partial wilderness alternative recommending wilderness designation of 26,750 acres and nonwilderness for 19,400 acres was the proposed action in the Final EIS and is the recommendation of this report.

2. Recommendation and Rationale

26,750 acres recommended for wilderness

19,400 acres recommended for nonwilderness

The recommendation for the Jerry Peak WSA is to designate 26,750 acres as wilderness and to release 19,400 acres for other uses. The environmentally preferable alternative is the all wilderness alternative. It would cause the least change from the natural environment over the long term. The recommendation would use all practical means to avoid or minimize adverse environmental impacts. The 26,750 acres of federal land within the WSA recommended for wilderness and the 19,400 acres recommended for nonwilderness are shown on the Jerry Peak Proposal map.

The 26,750 acres recommended for wilderness designation contains excellent scenery, outstanding recreation and solitude opportunities. This WSA is located in the Rocky Mountain Forest Province/Sagebrush Steppe Ecosystem which is not presently represented in Idaho wilderness. The steeper canyons and the vegetation provide excellent screening, offering outstanding naturalness and providing the visitor with a unique opportunity to experience a natural environment minimally imprinted by humans.

The steepness of the terrain and lack of vehicular access points will effectively control ORVs which will aid in retaining the naturalness and provide more opportunities for solitude. Also, the boundaries are easily identifiable. The recommended area does contain timber resources which would be foregone but the high wilderness values are considered more important for preservation. Mineral resources are minimal and are not considered a major conflict with designation.

A special feature is Herd Lake which, with its interesting geologic beginnings, is a focal point for visitors and offers an outstanding opportunity for fishing, hiking, sightseeing, backpacking, photography and interpretation.

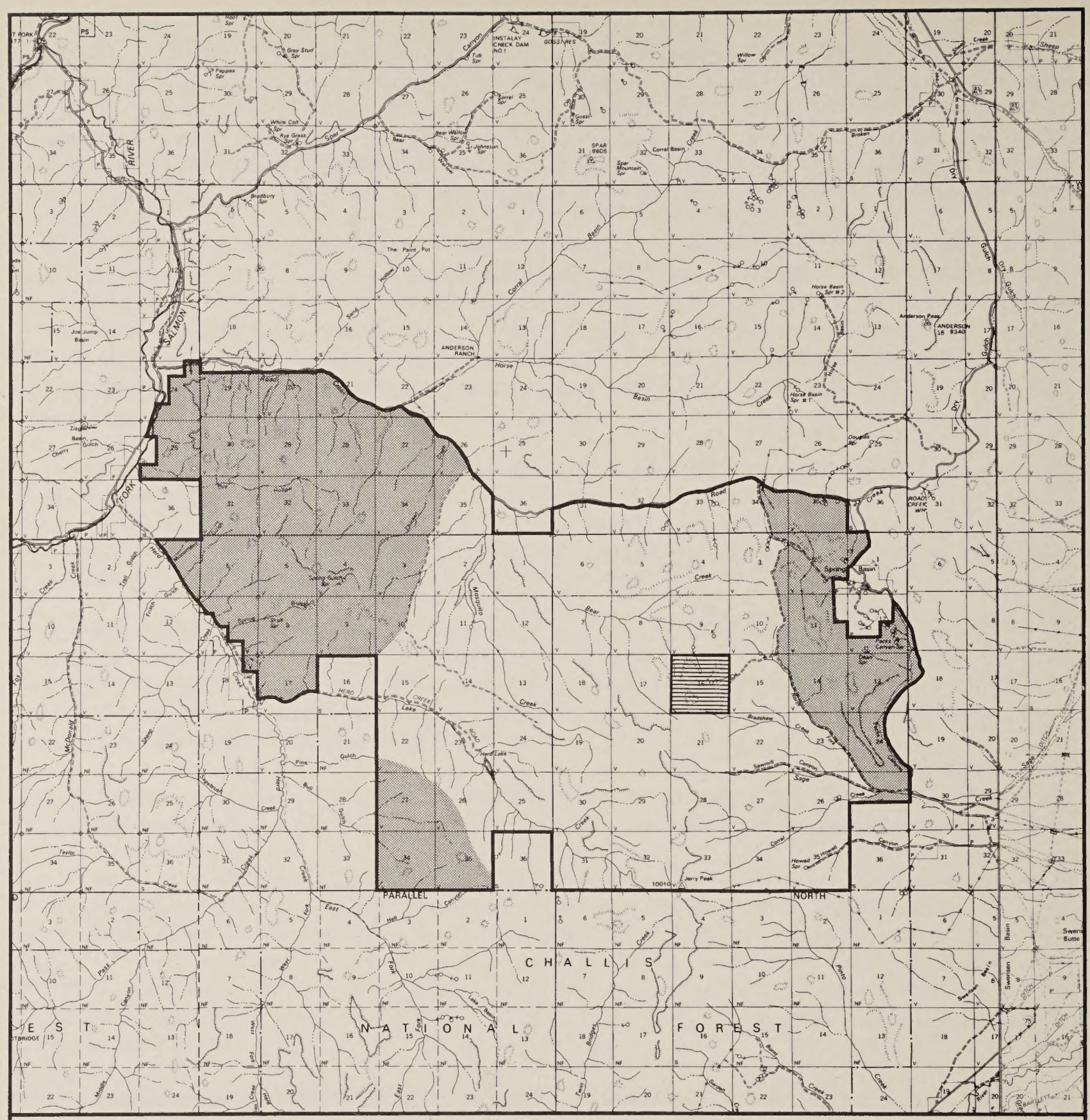
Three areas shown as the shaded areas on the Jerry Peak Proposal map are not recommended for designation because of resource conflicts. The portions of the area not recommended suitable for wilderness designation would be more difficult to manage. Area A is located in the northwestern portion of the WSA. This portion is recommended as nonsuitable because it is surrounded by the East Fork, Herd Creek, Road Creek and Mosquito Creek Roads. These roads parallel the WSA for approximately 17 miles and their use can be seen and heard throughout this portion of the WSA. These roads are used by visitors for access into large tracts adjacent to public lands.

In the southwest corner of the WSA, 2,140 acres (Area B) are located outside of the WSA's main drainage (Lake Creek) and are recommended for nonwilderness because the ridgeline between Lake and Herd Creek drainages would be a more natural and manageable boundary.

The portion of the WSA (Area C) east of the North Fork of Sage Creek Road is recommended as nonsuitable for several reasons. First, the area is easily accessible by ORVs and could continue to provide a vehicle-based recreation opportunity. Next, it already has several vehicle ways that are increasing in use. Third, it is surrounded by the North Fork of Sage Creek Road, Road Creek Road and the heavily used Pecks Canyon Road. Finally, the area is underlain by thick sediments that could contain oil and gas.

A treaty signed with the Shoshone-Bannock Indian Tribe allows the tribe members ". . . the right, without any charge therefore to cut timber for their own use, but not for sale, and pasture their livestock on said pubic lands, and to hunt thereon and fish in the streams thereof." Although the Tribe has not claimed this right to date, any request would be honored. Cutting timber is not compatible with wilderness designation and would degrade the area's naturalness and impact opportunities for solitude. These rights continue the exist on the entire Jerry Peak WSA. To date, the Shoshone-Bannock Tribe has not opted to exercise this right.

There are 640 acres of state land inholdings. Acquisition of additional state lands bordering the WSA may be necessary to establish more logical and controllable boundaries.



RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS

RECOMMENDED FOR NONWILDERNESS

LAND OUTSIDE WSA RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS

SPLIT ESTATE

STATE

PRIVATE

N

ID-46-14
JERRY PEAK
PROPOSAL

FEBRUARY 1988

Table 1 -- Land Status and Acreage Summary of the Study Area
JERRY PEAK WSA

Within Wilderness Study Area

BLM (surface and subsurface)	46,150
Split Estate (BLM surface only)	0
Inholdings (state, private)	640
Total	46,790

Within the Recommended Wilderness Boundary

BLM (within WSA)	26,750
BLM (outside WSA)	0
Split Estate (within WSA)[1]	0
Split Estate (outside WSA)[1]	0
Total BLM Land Recommended for Wilderness	26,750
Inholdings (state, private)[1]	640
State land (outside WSA)	0

Within the Area Not Recommended for Wilderness

BLM	19,400
Split Estate[1]	0
Total BLM Land Not Recommended for Wilderness	19,400
Inholdings (state, private)[1]	0

[1]Appendix I is a detailed description of inholdings and split estate tracts included within the study. For purposes of this report, split estate lands are defined only as those lands with federal surface and nonfederal subsurface (minerals). Lands that have federal minerals but nonfederal surface should be classified in this report by the owner of the surface estate.

3. Criteria Considered in Developing the Wilderness Recommendations

Wilderness Characteristics

A. Naturalness

The Jerry Peak WSA presents visitors with the general appearance of naturalness. The WSA represents a transition from low-elevation sagebrush and grass to higher elevation conifer forests. The recommended portion of this WSA has steep sagebrush- and forest-covered canyons offering outstanding naturalness. The overall influence of human imprints on the naturalness of the area, as perceived by the visitor, is minimal due to the wide dispersal of low impact developments.

Imprints exist from fences and spring developments associated with range management activities, access roads and jeep trails. The range improvements tend to be small scale, blending into the natural landscape. The four roads which dead end in the WSA (the Herd Lake, Mosquito Creek, Sage Creek and Bradshaw Creek Roads), while technically not a part of the WSA, do influence the perception of naturalness of the WSA immediately adjacent to the roads, especially in the nonrecommended portions (A, B and C).

No particular area in the WSA contains a concentration of imprints. The center of the WSA between the North Fork of Sage Creek and Mosquito Creek Roads contains fewer imprints than do the eastern and western edges of the unit. On these lower rolling hills, ORV access is easier and would be more difficult to prevent.

B. Solitude

The Jerry Peak WSA contains an outstanding opportunity for solitude, especially in the Bear Creek and Lake Creek drainages. Topography of these areas is characterized by numerous steep canyons and creek drainages. Vegetative screening, especially in the east half of the WSA, further enhances the opportunities for solitude. Other than the boundary gravel roads and one small ranch, outside sights and sounds are not evident.

Large tracts of undeveloped BLM lands to the north and U.S. Forest Service (USFS) lands to the south enhance the feeling of solitude by creating a sense of vastness.

C. Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

Jerry Peak WSA, in combination with its relatively large size, lack of man-made or natural barriers and absence of developments in or near the eastern portion, contains outstanding opportunities for a primitive and unconfined type of recreation.

The rolling sagebrush-covered hills ascending into steeper terrain with large areas of timber provide opportunities for hiking, backpacking, fishing, hunting, horseback riding, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, photography, bird-watching and sightseeing. Herd Lake in the southwestern part of the Jerry Peak WSA is a destination point for many visitors.

D. Special Features

Jerry Peak WSA is within the Challis Wild Horse Range and offers excellent wild horse viewing. The wild horses are an introduced element in the WSA. The large landslide which created Herd Lake is an unusual geologic feature which could add to the visitor's appreciation of the area. It is the focal point of the WSA.

Diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System

A. Assessing the Diversity of Natural Systems and Features as Represented by Ecosystems

Wilderness designation of the Jerry Peak WSA would add an ecosystem not presently represented in Idaho. However, this ecosystem is represented in the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS) by four designated areas with 76,129 acres. There are eight other BLM study areas in the state under study with this ecosystem. This information is summarized on Table 2.

TABLE 2

Ecosystem Representation

Bailey-Kuchler Classification	NWPS Areas areas	NWPS Areas acres	Other BLM Studies areas	Other BLM Studies acres
Rocky Mountain Forest Province				
		NATIONWIDE		
Sagebrush Steppe Ecosystem	4	76,129	23	247,843
		IDAHO		
Sagebrush Steppe Ecosystem	0	0	8	162,710

B. Expanding the Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive Recreation Within a Day's Driving Time (Five Hours) of Major Population Centers

The Jerry Peak WSA is within a five-hour drive from Boise, Idaho. Table 3 summarizes the number and acreage of designated areas and other BLM study areas within a five-hour drive of the population center.

Table 3

Wilderness Opportunities for Residents of Major Population Centers

Population Centers	NWPS Areas		Other BLM Studies	
	areas	acres	areas	acres
Boise, Idaho	16	4,741,570	141	5,374,250

C. Balancing the Geographic Distribution of Wilderness Areas

Idaho has the largest wilderness area in the contiguous 48 states, the 2.2 million acre Frank Church - River of No Return Wilderness.

Manageability

The Jerry Peak WSA could be managed as a wilderness area. Some fence, signing and patrolling would be necessary to effectively eliminate vehicle use. While present vehicle use is not a management problem in a nonwilderness environment, it would be a significant administrative problem to a designated wilderness. The suitable portion would be easier to manage because of its steepness and inaccessibility to vehicles. However, fencing would be necessary along portions of the Mosquito Creek, Lake Creek and Sawmill Canyon Roads.

Acquisition of 1,560 acres of state lands bordering or included in the WSA would be required to effectively manage the area and establish more logical boundary lines. Access disputes concerning included lands would be avoided.

The part of the WSA (Areas A and C) not recommended for wilderness occur on the periphery of the recommended portion. Both areas are almost surrounded by cherry-stem roads allowing access into large tracts of public lands. These roads have a combined length of 32-plus miles and are used regularly. This accessibility allows vehicular entry to most of the WSA. To maintain the WSA's naturalness and solitude opportunities, many more miles of fencing would be necessary as well as constant patrolling. The core of the WSA naturally eliminates potential ORV use.

The southwest corner (Area B) located outside the main WSA drainage was eliminated because the ridgeline between Lake Creek and Herd Creek is a more logical and identifiable boundary.

Energy and Minerals Resource Values

The U.S. Geological Survey and the Bureau of Mines made a geological and mineral survey of the Jerry Peak WSA from 1980 through 1983.

Evidence of metallic mineralization is lacking in the WSA. A low to moderate resource potential for barite is assigned to the eastern boundary of the WSA.

The WSA has low to no potential for geothermal energy resources.

Most of the Jerry Peak WSA has been leased for oil and gas exploration; however, significant oil and gas occurrences are unlikely.

There is no record of mineral production or development.

Impacts on Resources

The following comparative table summarizes the effects on pertinent resources for all the alternatives considered including designation or nondesignation of the entire area as wilderness.

Table 4
Comparative Summary of the Impacts by Alternative
WSA ID-46-14 (JERRY PEAK)

ISSUE TOPICS	PROPOSED ACTION (PARTIAL PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)	NO WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE	ALL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE	PARTIAL PROTECTION ALTERNATIVE	PARTIAL BALANCE ALTERNATIVE	PARTIAL PRODUCTION ALTERNATIVE
Impacts on Wilderness Values	Loss of wilderness values on 450 acres (1%). Retention of wilderness values on 26,750 acres (55%). Wilderness values subject to loss on 18,950 acres (41%) but no adverse activities anticipated in next 10 years.	Loss of wilderness values on 12,000 acres.	Wilderness values on all 46,150 acres would be retained.	Wilderness values retained on 41,690 acres. Wilderness values subject to loss on 4,460 acres but no adverse activities anticipated in next 10 years.	Loss of wilderness values on 450 acres (1%). Retention of wilderness values on 28,890 acres (63%). Wilderness values subject to loss on 16,810 acres (31%) but no adverse activities anticipated in next 10 years.	Loss of wilderness values on 8,010 acres (17%). Retention of wilderness values on 21,190 acres (62%) but no adverse activities anticipated in next 10 years.
Impacts on Development of Mineral and Energy Resources	19,400 acres open to mineral entry and leasing. 26,750 closed to mineral entry and leasing. 10 acres of surface disturbance due to oil and gas lease development.	46,150 acres open to mineral entry and leasing. 10 acres of surface disturbance due to oil and gas lease development.	46,150 acres closed to mineral entry and leasing. No surface acres disturbed due to formal withdrawal from entry.	4,460 acres open to mineral entry. 41,690 acres closed to mineral entry and leasing. No surface disturbance anticipated.	17,260 acres open to mineral entry and leasing. 28,890 acres closed to mineral entry and leasing. 10 acres of surface disturbance due to oil and gas lease development.	36,650 acres open to mineral entry and leasing. 9,500 acres closed to mineral entry and leasing. 10 acres of surface disturbance due to oil and gas lease development.
Impacts on Timber Harvest	Harvest of 11.5 MMBF would be foregone. No surface disturbance. Heavier utilization of other lands would be required to meet allowable cut.	Harvest of 11.5 MMBF could occur. 1,550 acres of surface disturbance. 15 miles of new road.	Harvest of 11.5 MMBF would be foregone. No surface disturbance. Heavier utilization of other lands would be required to meet allowable cut.	See Proposed Action.	See Proposed Action.	Harvest of 4 MMBF would be foregone. Harvest of 7.5 MMBF could occur. 1,000 acres of surface disturbance. 11 miles of new road.
Impacts on Water Quality in the East Fork of the Salmon River	Minimal benefit (less than 1%) through revegetation of jeep trails.	Increase in sediment load of 10% of less during active logging operations.	Sediment load in the East Fork could be reduced 4% due to reduced road usage; 10% increase would not occur.	Minimal benefit (less than 2%) through revegetation of jeep trails.	See Proposed Action.	Increase in sediment load of 10% or less during active logging operations.
Impacts on East Fork of the Salmon River Anadromous Fishery	Slight improvement (less than 1%) due to better water quality.	10% reduction in number of salmon and steelhead fry during logging operations.	4% improvement due to water quality; 10% loss of fry would not occur.	Slight improvement (less than 2%) due to better water quality.	See Proposed Action.	10% reduction in number of salmon and steelhead fry during logging operations.
Impacts on Recreational Off-Road Vehicle Use	25% potential in use. Displacement of 50 visitor days annually. Use can be absorbed by other areas with negligible impact.	No displacement of use.	100% reduction in use. Displacement of 150 visitor days annually. Use can be absorbed by other areas with negligible impact.	82.5% reduction potential in use. Displacement of 175 visitor days annually. Use can be absorbed by other areas with negligible impact.	See Proposed Action.	5% reduction potential in use. Displacement of 10 visitor days annually. Use can be absorbed by other areas with negligible impact.

Local Social and Economic Considerations

The social and economic factors were not considered a significant issue in the study.

Summary of WSA-Specific Public Comments

Public involvement has occurred throughout the wilderness review process.

Wilderness was not an issue in the original Challis MFP and was not a subject of comments. No comments received during the wilderness inventory were deferred for consideration during the study.

Twenty-four of the comments received during the Draft EIS comment period or at the public hearing specifically mentioned the Jerry Peak WSA. The Draft EIS recommended all of the WSA as suitable while the PFEIS now recommends 26,750 acres as suitable and 19,400 acres as nonsuitable. Sixteen comments supported the suitable recommendation. Five commenters were opposed to a suitable wilderness recommendation. Four of these comments stated that Idaho had enough existing wilderness and one comment noted the potential for energy and mineral resources. Three other comments recommended a "no action" alternative or a new study since they felt the mineral resource values quality standard cannot be met. These are considered as additional no wilderness comments.

Three government agency comments mentioned the WSA. The Soil Conservation Service disagreed with the suitable recommendation stating that it appeared to be a vehicle restriction designation in the form of wilderness. The Idaho Department of Lands expressed a desire to exchange state land that would be affected by a wilderness designation. The Idaho Department of Health and Welfare concurred with the recommendation on the basis of water quality benefits to tributaries of a special resource water.

APPENDIX I -- JERRY PEAK
Estimated Costs of Acquisition of Nonfederal Holdings Within Areas Recommended for Designation(1)

Legal Description	Total Acreage	Number of Owners	Type of Ownership by Estate: Surface Estate	Type of Ownership by Estate: Subsurface Estate	Presently Proposed for Acquisition	Preferred Method of Acquisition	Estimated Cost of Acquisition: Land Costs (in $)	Estimated Cost of Acquisition: Processing Costs (in $)
Parcel No. 1 T. 9 N., R. 20 E. Sec. 16	640	1	State	State		Exchange	N/A	25,000

(1)The estimated costs listed in this appendix in no way represent a formal appraised value of the land or mineral estate but are rough estimates based on sales or exchanges of lands or mineral estates with similar characteristics to those included in the WSA. The estimates are for purposes of establishing a range of potential costs to the government of acquiring nonfederal holdings and in no way represent an offer to purchase or exchange at the cost estimate included in this appendix.

Jerry Peak West Wilderness Study Area

1. The Study Area -- 13,530 acres

The Jerry Peak West WSA (ID-46-14A) is located in Custer County 20 miles south of Challis, Idaho. The WSA includes 13,530 acres of BLM lands. There are no state or private inholdings. The WSA is bounded on the west and north by the East Fork of the Salmon River, on the east by the Herd Creek Road and on the south by the Challis National Forest. The WSA consists of the foothills of Sheep Mountain (in the Challis National Forest), extending from the banks of the East Fork Salmon River through moderately steep sagebrush- and grass-covered hills that have pockets of timber in the higher elevations.

The WSA was studied under Section 603 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) and was included in the Challis Management Framework Plan Amendment/Final Environmental Impact Statement finalized in September 1986. Two alternatives were analyzed in the EIS: an all wilderness alternative and a no wilderness alternative, which is the recommendation of this report.

2. Recommendation and Rationale

0 acres recommended for wilderness

13,530 acres recommended for nonwilderness

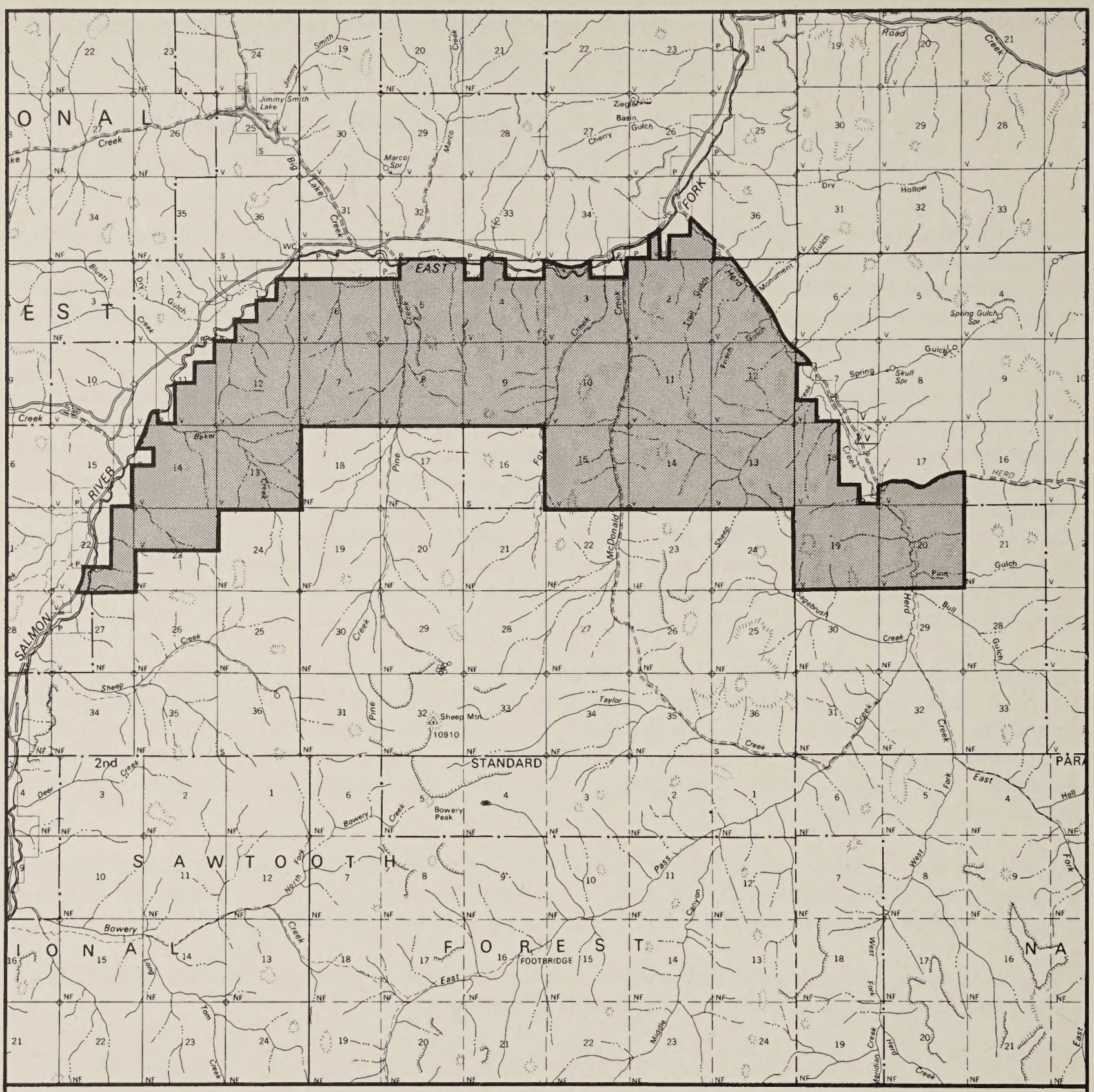
The recommendation is to not designate the Jerry Peak West WSA as wilderness and release the area for other uses. The environmentally preferable alternative is the all wilderness alternative. It would cause the least change from the natural environment over the long term. The recommendation would use all practical means to avoid or minimize adverse environmental impacts. The entire 13,530 acres of public land are shown on the Jerry Peak West Proposal map.

The quality of the wilderness values was the key consideration in the recommendation. While the WSA contains the wilderness values necessary for study, they are not considered to merit inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System. The WSA generally appears natural but there are several site-specific signs of man, primarily rangeland developments, which impact naturalness locally. Solitude opportunities available in the WSA are similar to those afforded by the adjacent thousands of acres of land. The WSA does offer outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation. While opportunities are available, the area is not a popular destination point and the values are the same as those available on thousands of adjacent acres. There are no significant wildlife species or habitats, geologic features or scientific and educational values in the area that would benefit from wilderness designation.

A treaty signed with the Shoshone-Bannock Indian Tribe allows the tribe members " . . . the right, without any charge therefor to cut timber for their own use, but not for sale, and pasture their livestock on said pubic lands, and to hunt thereon and fish in the streams thereof." Although the Tribe has not claimed this right, any request would be honored. Cutting timber is not compatible with wilderness designation and would degrade the area's naturalness and impact solitude. This applies to all of the WSA east of McDonald Creek. To date, the Shoshone-Bannock Tribe has not opted to exercise this right.

Presently, there is little threat to the existing naturalness of the area. There are no known or projected activities, no known mineral potential and no valid rights of others in the WSA. Therefore, even without wilderness designation, the quality and level of values now found in the WSA are not expected to significantly change.

The WSA also lacks any special features that would be considered a focal or destination point for visitors. These values are much the same as those available on thousands of adjacent acres.



ID-46-14A
JERRY PEAK WEST
PROPOSAL

FEBRUARY 1988

Table 1 -- Land Status and Acreage Summary of the Study Area
JERRY PEAK WEST

Within Wilderness Study Area

BLM (surface and subsurface)	13,530
Split Estate (BLM surface only)	0
Inholdings (state, private)	0
Total	13,530

Within the Recommended Wilderness Boundary

BLM (within WSA)	0
BLM (outside WSA)	0
Split Estate (within WSA)	0
Split Estate (outside WSA)	0
Total BLM Land Recommended for Wilderness	0
Inholdings (state, private)	0
State land (outside WSA)	0

Within the Area Not Recommended for Wilderness

BLM	13,530
Split Estate	0
Total BLM Land Not Recommended for Wilderness	13,530
Inholdings (state, private)	0

3. Criteria Considered in Developing the Wilderness Recommendations

Wilderness Characteristics

A. Naturalness

The Jerry Peak West WSA presents a general appearance of naturalness. The WSA represents a transition from lower elevation sagebrush/grass ecosystems to high-elevation conifer forest ecosystems. Minor imprints exist from one mile of fence, one mile of water pipeline and three spring developments. The range improvements tend to be small scale, blending into the natural landscape. They are considered minor impacts to naturalness.

B. Solitude

The WSA presents an outstanding opportunity for solitude. However, the proximity of the WSA to the East Fork Road lessens the visitor's perception of solitude due to the sights and sounds from nearby private homes, farms and ranches outside the WSA along the northern and western boundaries. These opportunities are due to the remoteness and lack of human activity in the area and are not due to any intrinsic values unique to the WSA.

C. Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

The inventory identified the WSA as possessing outstanding opportunities for a primitive and unconfined type of recreation due to its lack of man-made or natural barriers. Possible activities include hiking, backpacking, fishing, hunting, horseback riding, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, photography, bird-watching and sightseeing.

D. Special Features

The WSA lacks any special feature which could be called a focal or destination point attractive to visitors.

Diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System

A. Assessing the Diversity of Natural Systems and Features as Represented by Ecosystems

Wilderness designation of the Jerry Peak West WSA would add an ecosystem not presently represented in Idaho. However, this ecosystem is represented in the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS) by four designated areas with 76,129 acres. There are eight other BLM study areas in the state under study with this ecosystem. This information is summarized on Table 2.

TABLE 2

Ecosystem Representation

Bailey-Kuchler Classification	NWPS Areas areas	NWPS Areas acres	Other BLM Studies areas	Other BLM Studies acres
Rocky Mountain Forest Province				
		NATIONWIDE		
Sagebrush Steppe Ecosystem	4	76,129	23	247,843
		IDAHO		
Sagebrush Steppe Ecosystem	0	0	8	162,710

B. Expanding the Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive Recreation Within a Day's Driving Time (Five Hours) of Major Population Centers

The Jerry Peak West WSA is within a five-hour drive from Boise, Idaho. Table 3 summarizes the number and acreage of designated areas and other BLM study areas within a five-hour drive of the population center.

Table 3

Wilderness Opportunities for Residents of Major Population Centers

Population Centers	NWPS Areas		Other BLM Studies	
	areas	acres	areas	acres
Boise, Idaho	16	4,741,570	141	5,374,250

C. Balancing the Geographic Distribution of Wilderness Areas

Idaho has the largest wilderness area in the contiguous 48 states, the 2.2 million acre Frank Church - River of No Return Wilderness. Wilderness designation of the Jerry Peak West WSA would not contribute to balancing the geographic distribution of areas within the NWPS but would further concentrate wilderness areas in Idaho.

Manageability

The WSA could be managed as wilderness. Access by vehicle is virtually nonexistent and is controlled by private landowners along the East Fork of the salmon River. Cooperative agreements with the private landowners could be adequate to control or allow access.

It may be difficulty, however, to maintain the integrity of area as wilderness due to its relatively long, narrow shape and the encircling nonwilderness lands. Future use and access into surrounding U.S. Forest Service and private lands could restrict the ability to retain wilderness values in this area.

The Shoshone and Bannock Indians of the Fort Hall Reservation, Idaho, through the treaty of Fort Bridger on July 3, 1868, and ratified by the United States Senate on February 16, 1869, ceded lands to the United States. A follow-up agreement with the Shoshone and Bannock Indians concluded February 5, 1898, ratified June 6, 1900, (31 Stat. 672) in Article IV of the Act to ratify the agreement (31 Stat. 674) states as follows:

> "So long as any of the lands ceded, granted, and relinquished under this treaty remain a part of the public domain, Indians belonging to the above-mentioned tribes, and living on the reduced reservation, shall have the right, without any charge to pasture their livestock on said public lands, and to hunt thereon and fish in the streams thereof."

Although the Tribe has not yet claimed this right, any request would be honored. Cutting timber is not compatible with wilderness designation, would degrade the area's naturalness and impact opportunities for solitude. This applies to all of the WSA east of McDonald Creek.

Energy and Minerals Resource Values

The U.S. Geological Survey and the Bureau of Mines prepared a mineral assessment for the Jerry Peak West WSA in 1984.

Evidence of metallic mineralization is lacking in the Jerry Peak West WSA. A low resource potential for base metals is assigned to the part of the WSA that is underlain by Paleozoic sedimentary rocks.

Some of the Jerry Peak West WSA has Been leased for oil and gas exploration; however, significant oil and gas occurrences are unlikely because the Paleozoic sedimentary rocks, the most likely targets for oil and gas exploration, are complexly folded and faulted. In addition, heating of these rocks during the Eocene volcanism, accompanied and followed by high-angle faulting, probably drove off or destroyed oil and gas that may have accumulated.

Impacts on Resources

The following comparative table summarizes the effects on pertinent resources for all the alternatives considered including designation or nondesignation of the entire area as wilderness.

Table 4
Comparative Summary of the Impacts by Alternative
WSA ID-31-17 (JERRY PEAK WEST)

ISSUE TOPICS	NO WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE	ALL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE
Impacts on Wilderness Values	Loss of wilderness values on 495 acres. Wilderness values on 13,035 acres sub-ject to loss but no adverse activities an-ticipated in the next 20 years.	Wilderness values on all 13,530 acres would be retained.
Impacts on Development of Energy and Mineral Resources	13,539 acres open to mineral entry and leasing. 45 acres of surface disturbance.	All 13,530 acres closed to mineral entry and leasing. No surface disturbance.
Impacts on Water Quality in the East Fork of the Salmon River	Negligible (less than 1% increase in sediment).	No change.
Impacts on the East Fork of the Salmon River and Anadromous Fishery	Potential reduction (less than 1%) in number of salmon and steelhead fry.	No change.
Impacts on Recreation Off-Road Vehicle Use	No displacement of users.	100% reduction in use. Displacement of 15 visitor days. Impact of shifting this use to other public lands would be negligible.

Local Social and Economic Considerations

The social and economic factors were not considered a significant issue in the study.

Summary of WSA-Specific Public Comments

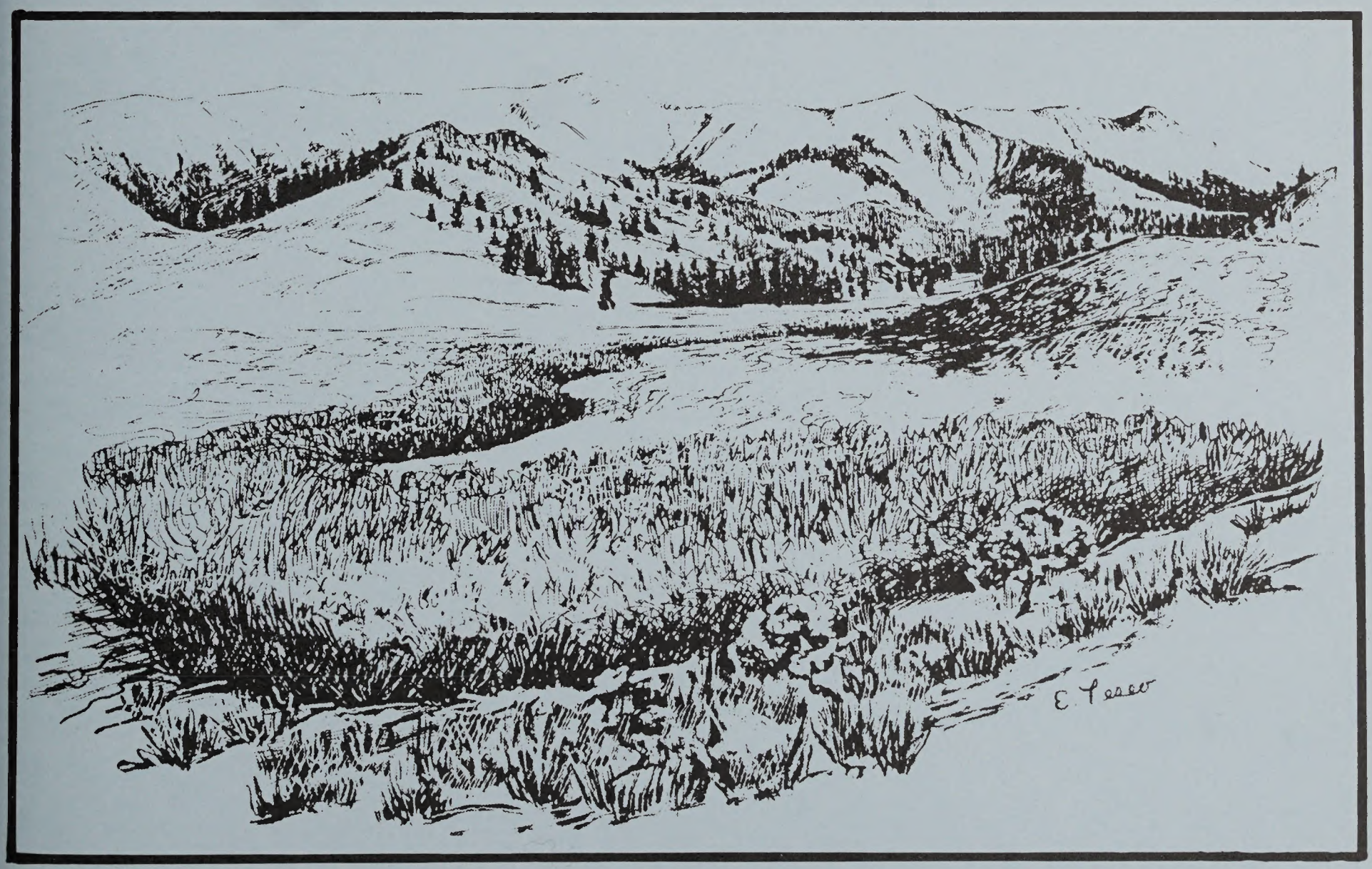
Public involvement has occurred throughout the wilderness review process. Wilderness was not an issue in the original Challis MFP and was not a subject of comments. No comments received during the wilderness inventory were deferred for consideration during the study.

Twenty-three of the comments received during the Draft EIS comment period or at the public hearing specifically mentioned the Jerry Peak West WSA. The Draft EIS recommended all of the Jerry Peak West WSA as suitable. A reevaluation of the wilderness characteristics prior to release of the DFEIS resulted in a recommendation change to nonsuitable. Sixteen comments supported the suitable recommendation. Four commenters were opposed to a suitable wilderness recommendation stating that Idaho had enough existing wilderness. Three comments recommended a "no action" alternative or a new study since they felt the energy and mineral resource values quality standard cannot be met. These are considered as additional no wilderness comments.

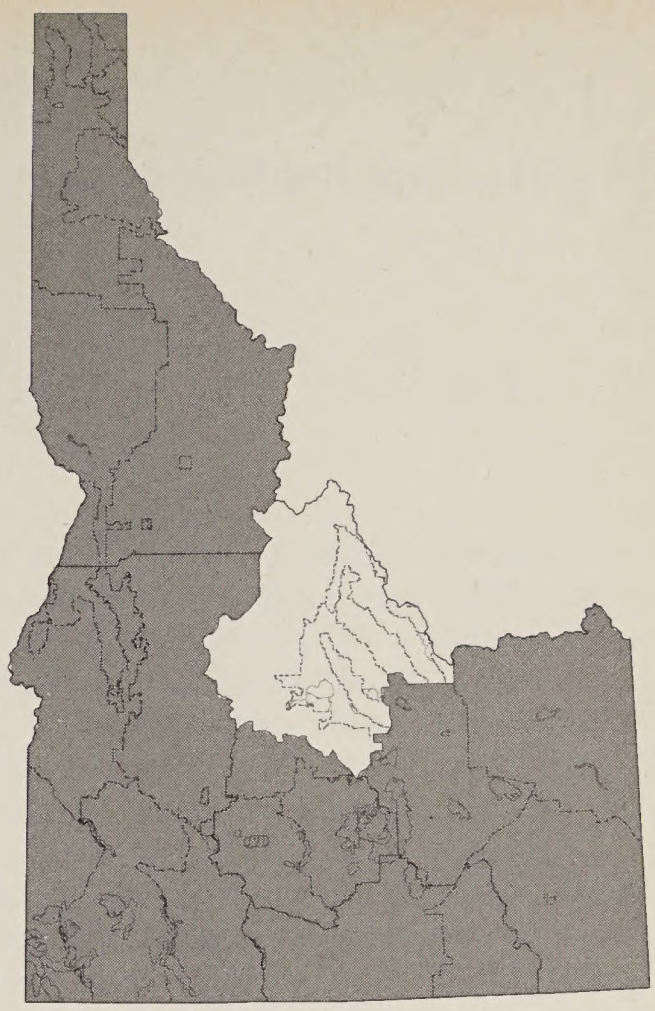
Three government agency comments mentioned the Jerry Peak West WSA. The Soil Conservation Service disagreed with the suitable recommendation stating that it appeared to be a vehicle restriction designation in the form of wilderness. The Idaho Department of Lands expressed a desire to exchange state land that would be affected by a wilderness designation. The Idaho Department of Health and Welfare concurred with the recommendation on the basis of water quality benefits to tributaries of a special resource water.

SUMMARY ANALYSIS OF SPECIFIC WSA RECOMMENDATIONS

LEMHI WILDERNESS



LEMHI WILDERNESS



SALMON

LEMHI

RESOURCE

CHALLIS

DISTRICT

1

AREA

RESOURCE

AREA

LEGEND

DISTRICT BOUNDARY

RESOURCE AREA BOUNDARY

WILDERNESS STUDY AREA

LEMHI

1. Eighteenmile

N

0 10 20 30 40 50

Scale in Miles

Eighteenmile Wilderness Study Area

1. The Study Area -- 24,922 acres

The Eighteenmile WSA (ID-43-3) is located in Lemhi County 15 miles southeast of Leadore, Idaho. The WSA includes 24,922 acres of BLM lands. The WSA is bounded on the north by the Salmon National Forest, on the south by the Targhee National Forest, on the east by the Beaverhead National Forest and on the west by public and private lands in the Eighteenmile, Clear and Ten Mile Creek drainages. The WSA is mountainous with low hills rising to the Continental Divide's rolling meadows and steep cliffs dominated by the 11,141-foot Eighteenmile Peak which is the eastern boundary of the WSA. Vegetation varies from lowland sagebrush-grass up through Douglas-fir, lodgepole pine and limber pine to grassy meadows on the Divide.

The WSA was studied under Section 603 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) and was included in the Lemhi Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), filed in December 1987. Five alternatives were studied in the EIS: an all wilderness alternative; a no wilderness retention alternative; a no wilderness/no action alternative; and a partial wilderness alternative in which 14,796 acres would be recommended for wilderness and 10,126 acres would be released for uses other than wilderness, which is the recommendation of this report.

2. Recommendation and Rationale

14,796 acres recommended for wilderness

10,126 acres recommended for nonwilderness

The recommendation for the Eighteenmile WSA is to designate 14,796 acres as wilderness and to release 10,126 acres for uses other than wilderness. The environmentally preferable alternative is the all wilderness alternative with acquisitions. It would cause the least change from the natural environment over the long term. The recommendation would use all practical means to avoid or minimize adverse environmental impacts. The 14,796 acres of federal land within the WSA recommended for wilderness and the 10,126 acres recommended for nonwilderness are shown on the Eighteenmile Proposal map.

The recommendation of 14,796 acres for wilderness is based on the area's exemplary wilderness values, ease of management, its proximity and interrelation with the Italian Peaks RARE II Areas in both Idaho and Montana and the lack of resource conflicts. The 14,796 acres recommended for wilderness designation provide exceptional scenery, recreation and solitude. The area is in a rather remote portion of Lemhi County and receives less than 100 visitor use days annually. The recommended portion also abuts the RARE II Units Italian Peaks located to the south and east. The three areas, if designated as wilderness, would provide a contiguous wilderness that straddles the Continental Divide in Montana and Idaho.

Wilderness designation of the recommended area would ensure preservation of an exceptional landscape along the Continental Divide. The rolling foothills are comprised of sagebrush and grass, contrasting with rolling meadows and steep cliffs of the Continental Divide, offering the visitor an outstanding opportunity to experience the naturalness of the nation's "backbone."

The topographic relief, plant communities and lack of roads or vehicle ways into and adjacent to the recommended portion of the WSAs offer outstanding opportunities for solitude. The area offers outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation as human imprints are limited to one vehicle way and very few range improvements.

There are few conflicts with other resource uses of the area recommended for wilderness. Timber in the recommended area is not of sufficient quantity to be of commercial value, especially considering the distance to local mills.

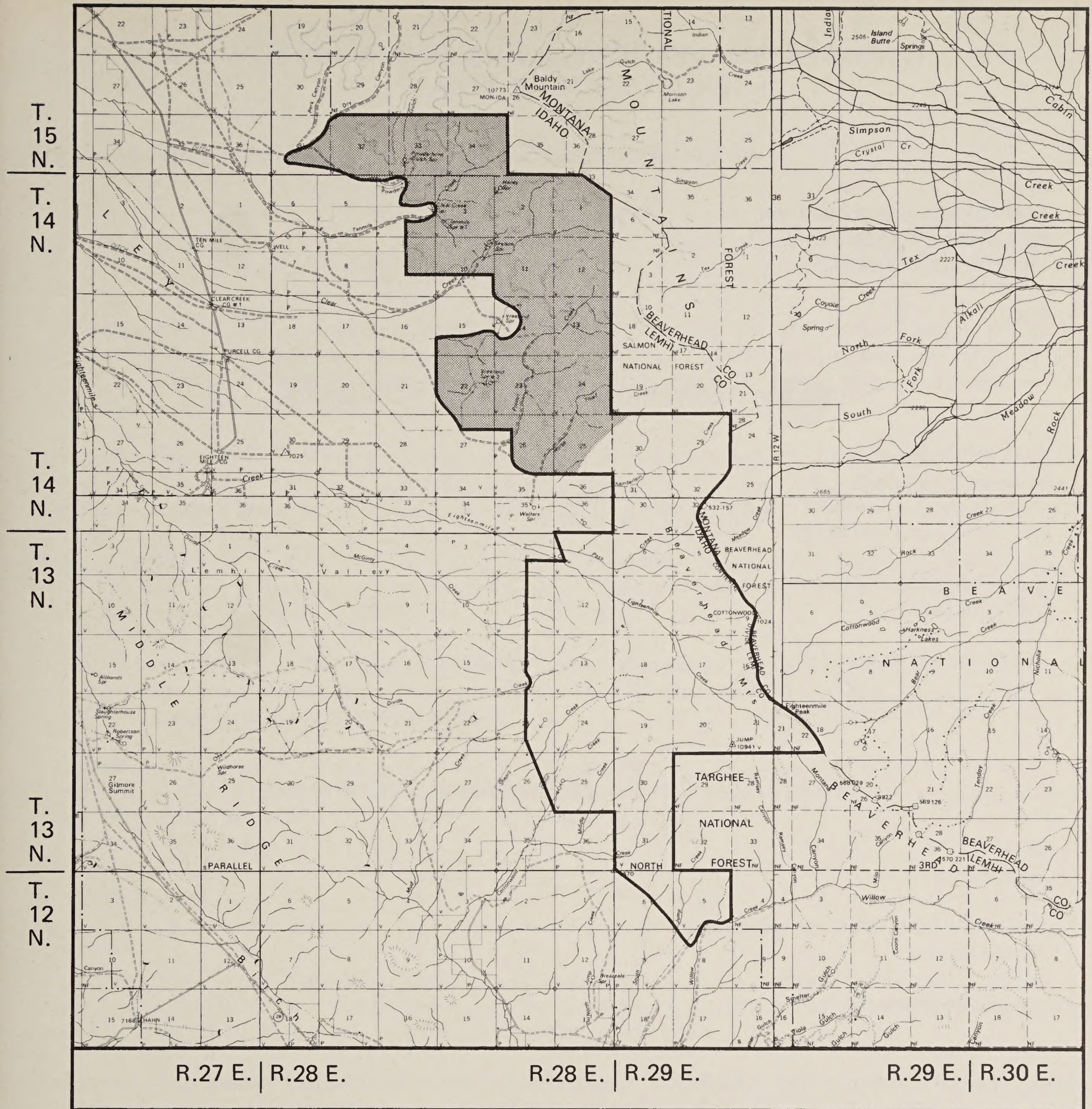
The displacement of ORV use is not significant because the proposed area receives only 15 visitor use days per year and the adjacent areas outside the WSA offer almost limitless ORV opportunities.

The 10,126 acre portion that is not recommended for wilderness designation lies to the north of the recommended portion. Removing this area from the suitable area would allow future phosphate and gypsum mining on 2,470 acres. According to the USGS survey, potential is high for gypsum and moderately high for phosphate. Portions of the 2,470 acres are currently under application for prospective permits. If this occurs, four miles of new road probably will be built.

Also, the northern portion of the Eighteenmile WSA surrounds an isolated portion of the Salmon National Forest west of the Continental Divide that was not recommended for wilderness. Wilderness designation of this portion of the WSA could eliminate access to this inholding or, more likely, a cherry-stem road would be necessary, dissecting the WSA.

Another consideration was that the northern portion is more open and less steep, making most of the area more accessible by ORVs. Preventing access would be possible by fencing and signing but would lessen the feeling of naturalness, solitude and the unconfined recreation opportunities, especially on the Continental Divide.

Five hundred acres in the northwestern tip of the Eighteenmile WSA are in a larger area of about 2,500 acres which is rated as crucial elk winter habitat. General elk winter habitat extends north and south of the crucial area along the edge of the foothills. Approximately 240 head of elk winter in this area.



RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS

RECOMMENDED FOR NONWILDERNESS

LAND OUTSIDE WSA RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS

SPLIT ESTATE

STATE

PRIVATE

1 0 1 2 3
Scale in Miles

ID-43-3
EIGHTEENMILE
PROPOSAL

JUNE 1988

Table 1 -- Land Status and Acreage Summary of the Study Area
EIGHTEENMILE WSA

Within Wilderness Study Area

BLM (surface and subsurface)	24,922
Split Estate (BLM surface only)	0
Inholdings (state, private)	0
Total	24,922

Within the Recommended Wilderness Boundary

BLM (within WSA)	14,796
BLM (outside WSA)	0
Split Estate (within WSA)[1]	0
Split Estate (outside WSA)[1]	0
Total BLM Land Recommended for Wilderness	14,796
Inholdings (state, private)[1]	0
State land (outside WSA)	0

Within the Area Not Recommended for Wilderness

BLM	10,126
Split Estate[1]	0
Total BLM Land Not Recommended for Wilderness	10,126
Inholdings (state, private)[1]	0

[1]Appendix I is a detailed description of inholdings and split estate tracts included within the study. For purposes of this report, split estate lands are defined only as those lands with federal surface and nonfederal subsurface (minerals). Lands that have federal minerals but nonfederal surface should be classified in this report by the owner of the surface estate.

3. Criteria Considered in Developing the Wilderness Recommendations

Wilderness Characteristics

A. Naturalness

The Eighteenmile WSA is predominantly natural with few human imprints. The WSA is dominated by the 11,141-foot Eighteenmile Peak which forms the eastern boundary. The general topography is mountainous, with low hills rising to the Continental Divide's rolling meadows and steep cliffs. Eight major creeks, several valleys and numerous smaller gulches drain into Eighteenmile Creek to the west outside the WSA.

Vegetation varies from lowland sagebrush-grass communities up through Douglas-fir, lodgepole pine and limber pine to grassy meadows on the Divide. Willow-aspen riparian vegetation occupies most creek bottoms. No vegetation or timber harvest, other than some minor fence post and rail cutting, have occurred.

In the recommended area, the naturalness is outstanding. The visitor is offered a wide panorama dominated by steep valleys with small creeks draining into Eighteenmile Creek. Other than minor range improvements and a small vehicle way, human impacts are negligible.

The only human imprints are four miles of vehicle way, minor range improvements and off-site visual intrusions such as past mining activity at Clear Creek. These visual intrusions, although not within the WSA, are visible from much of the WSA, lessening the perception of naturalness.

Five hundred acres in the northwestern tip of the Eighteenmile WSA are in a larger area of about 2,500 acres which is rated as crucial elk winter habitat. General elk winter habitat extends north and south of the crucial area along the edge of the foothills. Approximately 240 head of elk winter in this area.

B. Solitude

The recommended portion of the WSA provides an outstanding opportunity for solitude due to rugged terrain, vegetative screening, remoteness and limited accessibility. Under ideal conditions of moderate (500 visitor use days per year) and evenly distributed use, opportunities would be of high quality.

The area currently receives less than 100 visitor use days per year. With heavy use (more than 500 visitor use days per year), it would be more difficult to isolate visitors from the sights and sounds of others since the steep slopes tend to concentrate use along the creek bottoms.

Solitude within the nonrecommended portion is also outstanding. However, the proximity to mining activities and lack of vegetative screening in this area opens much of the nonrecommended portion to these sights and sounds that exist outside the WSA's boundary.

C. Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

The Eighteenmile WSA offers outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation. Opportunities for hiking, backpacking, camping, horseback riding, rockhounding, hunting, wildlife viewing, photography, fishing, snowshoeing and cross-country skiing are excellent in the recommended portion. However, in the nonrecommended area, sights and sounds of mining activities, coupled with less vegetative screening, lessens the feeling of wildness.

D. Special Features

The Continental Divide forms the eastern boundary of the WSA. It is also the Montana and Idaho boundary.

Diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System

A. Assessing the Diversity of Natural Systems and Features as Represented by Ecosystems

Wilderness designation of this WSA would not add a new ecosystem or landform to the NWPS. The Eighteenmile WSA represents the Rocky Mountain Forest Province Douglas-fir Forest. This ecosystem is represented in the nearby Frank Church - River of No Return Wilderness and by 18 designated areas with 1,349,971 acres. There are 19 other BLM areas in the state under study with this ecosystem.

TABLE 2

Ecosystem Representation

Bailey-Kuchler Classification	NWPS Areas areas	NWPS Areas acres	Other BLM Studies areas	Other BLM Studies acres
Rocky Mountain Forest Province				
		NATIONWIDE		
Douglas-Fir Forest Ecosystem	18	1,349,971	4	26,152
		IDAHO		
Douglas-Fir Forest Ecosystem	0	0	19	173,228

B. Expanding the Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive Recreation Within a Day's Driving Time (Five Hours) of Major Population Centers

The Eighteenmile WSA is within a five-hour drive from Boise, Idaho. Table 3 summarizes the number and acreage of designated areas and other BLM study areas within a five-hour drive of the population center.

Table 3

Wilderness Opportunities for Residents of Major Population Centers

Population Centers	NWPS Areas		Other BLM Studies	
	areas	acres	areas	acres
Boise, Idaho	16	4,741,570	141	5,374,250

C. Balancing the Geographic Distribution of Wilderness Areas

Wilderness designation of the Eighteenmile WSA would not contribute to balancing the geographic distribution of areas within the NWPS but would further concentrate wilderness areas in Idaho.

Idaho contains six designated wilderness areas including the largest wilderness area in the contiguous 48 states, the 2.2 million acre Frank Church - River of No Return Wilderness. The 3,869,197 acres in these six areas amount to seven percent of the acreage in Idaho.

Manageability

The recommended portion of the WSA can be reasonably managed as wilderness since common boundaries abut the RARE II Areas Italian Peaks in both Idaho and Montana. The Continental Divide is extremely steep and inaccessible on the nonsuitable area. When combined with the RARE II Areas, this creates a logical and manageable unit because of the steep terrain and lie of the land.

On the northern and western boundaries, fencing and patrolling would be necessary to protect values on the lower elevation areas from impacts caused by ORV use because the terrain is a more gentle relief. However, most of the recommended portion is extremely steep and is inaccessible to ORVs. On the portion not recommended as suitable, administrative costs would likely be higher since the terrain is much gentler and allows access to ORVs. Fencing and patrolling would be necessary to protect wilderness values, even along the Continental Divide, which forms the eastern boundary to the WSA which is adjacent to nonwilderness U.S. Forest Service lands to the east.

Several thousand acres of U.S. Forest Service lands east of the WSA lie west of the Divide forming an island of nonwilderness lands in Idaho. Wilderness designation of this portion of Eighteenmile would cause road access problems to these lands.

Energy and Minerals Resource Values

The U.S. Geological Survey prepared a mineral resource report for the Eighteenmile WSA in 1988 (USGS Bulletin 1718-B).

The northern portion of the WSA has a high potential for gypsum. Gypsum has been commercially extracted from lands immediately adjacent to the WSA. The WSA has moderate potential for the occurrence of metallic minerals such as silver, copper, molybdenum, zinc and others.

Moderately high uranium values occur in the sediments of Eighteenmile Creek and Cottonwood Creek. These values probably resulted from fluvial concentration of trace amounts of uranium in the Beaverhead Pluton which forms the Continental Divide from Pass Creek to the southern limit of the WSA. None of the outcrop samples indicated any high uranium values including the samples taken from this intrusion.

The oil and gas potential at depths above 10,000 feet is low to moderate. It is expected that any hydrocarbons present would be in the form of natural gas rather than oil.

The potential for development of geothermal resources was not addressed in the USGS Mineral Resource Report (USGS Bulletin 1718-B) but is thought to be low.

The northern portion of the WSA has moderate to high potential for phosphate and parts of the WSA are presently under application for prospective permit.

Occurrence of mineral materials in both the suitable and nonsuitable portions of the Eighteenmile WSA is widespread. Sand and gravel, limestone and other bulk mineral resources are abundant throughout the entire WSA. Poor access and the distance to markets seriously reduce the potential for developing these resources.

Impacts on Resources

The comparative impact table on the following page summarizes the effects on pertinent resources for all the alternatives considered including designation or nondesignation of the entire area as wilderness.

Table 4
Comparative Summary of the Impacts by Alternative
WSA ID-43-3 (EIGHTEENMILE WSA)

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	PROPOSED ACTION (PARTIAL WILDERNESS/DEVELOPMENT)	NO WILDERNESS/ RETENTION	NO WILDERNESS/ DEVELOPMENT	ALL WILDERNESS	PARTIAL WILDERNESS RETENTION
Impacts on Wilderness Values	Naturalness and solitude would be adversely affected or lost on 2,470 acres (10% of WSA) due to the construction of 4 miles of new road and 2,270 acres of surface disturbance associated with projected mining development. Wilderness values on 7,656 acres (31%) would be sub-ject to loss but no adverse activities are presently anticipated.	Naturalness and solitude would be adversely affected or lost on 2,470 acres (10% of WSA) due to the construction of 4 miles of new road and 2,270 acres of surface disturbance associated with projected mining development. Wilderness values of 22,452 acres (90%) would be sub-ject to loss but no adverse activities are presently anticipated.	Naturalness and solitude would be adversely affected or lost on 2,470 acres (10% of WSA) due to the construction of 4 miles of new road and 2,270 acres of surface disturbance associated with projected mining development. Wilderness values on 22,452 acres (90%) would be sub-ject to loss but no adverse activities are presently anticipated.	Impacts to solitude and naturalness would not occur on 2,470 acres of projected development. No road construction or surface disturbance.	Naturalness and solitude would be adversely affected or lost on 1,250 acres (5% of WSA) due to the construction of 4 miles of new road and 1,050 acres of surface disturbance associated with projected mining development. Wilderness values on 8,926 acres (36%) would be sub-ject to loss but no adverse activities are presently anticipated.
Impacts on Exploration for and Development of Energy and Mineral Resources	Loss of opportunity to de-velop any energy and min-eral resources on 14,796 acres recommended for wilderness. Mining of both phosphate and gypsum is projected on the 2,470 acres within the area not recommended for wilderness.	Mining of both phosphate and gypsum is projected on 2,470 acres within the area not recommended for wilderness.	Mining of both phosphate and gypsum is projected on 2,470 acres within the area not recommended for wilderness.	Loss of opportunity to de-velop any energy and min-eral resources on 24,780 acres.	Loss of opportunity to de-velop any energy and min-eral resources on 14,796 acres recommended for wilderness. Mining of both phosphate and gypsum is projected on the 2,470 acres within the area not recommended for wilderness.
Impacts on Primitive, Semi-Primitive, Nonmotorized and Motorized Recreation Opportunities	Primitive and semi-primitive nonmotorized recreation opportunities would be lost on 4,026 acres due to the construction of roads and vehicle uses associated with projected mining activities. 15 visitor days of ORV use would be displaced.	Primitive and semi-primitive nonmotorized recreation opportunities would be lost on 4,026 acres due to the construction of roads and vehicle uses associated with projected mining activities. 15 visitor days of ORV use would be displaced.	In the long term, all primi-tive and semi-primitive nonmotorized recreational opportunities would be lost because of gradual proliferation in 4-wheel drive tracks and the in-fluence of mining activi-ties. No displacement of ORV use.	25 visitor days of ORV use displaced.	15 visitor days of ORV use would be displaced.
Impacts on Water Quality	Loss of 1 mile of marginal fishery habitat. No impact on fisherman use days (none occur). Water quali-ty could be adversely im-pacted in Tenmile Creek and Clear Creek by mining activity. Sediment levels could exceed Environ-mental Protection Agency (EPA) standards.	Loss of 1 mile of marginal fishery habitat. No impact on fisherman use days (none occur). Water quali-ty could be adversely im-pacted in Tenmile Creek and Clear Creek, depend-ing on the location of min-ing activity. Sediment le-vels could exceed EPA standards.	Loss of 1 mile of marginal fishery habitat. No impact on fisherman use days (none occur). Water quali-ty could be adversely im-pacted in all perennial streams in the area. In those watersheds where mining occurred, sediment levels could exceed EPA standards.	There would be no adverse impacts to water quality, fishery habitat or fisher-man use days.	Loss of 1 mile of marginal fishery habitat. No impact on fisherman use days (none occur). Water quali-ty could be adversely im-pacted depending on the location of mining activity. Tenmile Creek and Clear Creek could have sediment levels exceeding EPA standards.
Impacts on Crucial Elk Winter Range and Elk Numbers	All 500 acres of crucial elk winter range would be lost; 50% reduction in herd size (120 animals).	All 500 ares of crucial elk winter range would be lost; 50% reduction in herd size (120 animals).	All 500 acres of crucial elk winter range would be lost; 50% reduction in herd size (120 animals).	Loss of 500 acres of habi-tat and 120 animals would not occur.	All 500 acres of crucial elk winter range would be lost; 50% reduction in herd size (120 animals).

Local Social and Economic Considerations

The social and economic factors were not considered a significant issue in the study.

Summary of WSA-Specific Public Comments

Public involvement has occurred throughout the wilderness review process. During formal public review of the Draft EIS, 194 letters were received. Testimony was also heard at a formal meeting. Of the comment letters, 160 pertained to the wilderness suitability issue.

In general, six commenters supported wilderness designation for all or part of the Eighteenmile WSA, 153 commenters supported no wilderness for the WSA, while one commenter addressed the relative merits of the EIS but took no formal position on wilderness designation.

Those favoring wilderness commented on the outstanding solitude and primitive, unconfined recreation and the fact that the WSA abuts the recommended RARE II Unit Italian Peaks. Support for wilderness was also expressed for lands adjacent to the Continental Divide Trail and that wilderness would provide more protection for wildlife.

Those opposing wilderness were concerned that further wilderness designation would create too much wilderness in Idaho. Most local comment was from grazing permittees and ranchers opposed to wilderness.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Forest Service, Environmental Protection Agency, Idaho Air National Guard, Idaho State Historic Preservation Office and the Lemhi Soil and Water Conservation District all commented on the Draft EIS. The EPA was concerned that any decision short of total wilderness designation would not meet the Clean Water Act Standards. The Air National Guard opposed wilderness designation because its designation would conflict between overflights tactical training mission and the wilderness characteristic of solitude. The Lemhi Soil and Water Conservation District stated its policy is to oppose any further wilderness designation in Lemhi County. The Idaho State Historic Preservation Office did not comment specifically about wilderness.

APPENDIX I -- EIGHTEENMILE WSA
Estimated Costs of Acquisition of Nonfederal Holdings
Within Areas Recommended for Designation(1)

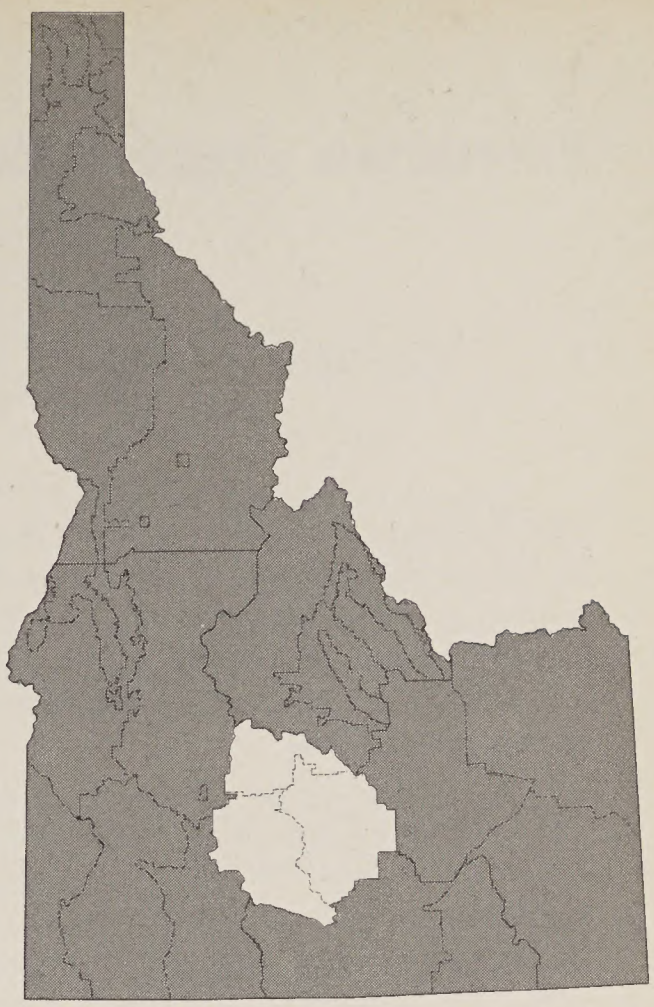
Legal Description	Total Acreage	Number of Owners	Type of Ownership by Estate: Surface Estate	Type of Ownership by Estate: Subsurface Estate	Presently Proposed for Acquisition	Preferred Method of Acquisition	Estimated Cost of Acquisition: Land Costs (in $)	Estimated Cost of Acquisition: Processing Costs (in $)
Parcel No. 1 T. 14 N., R. 28 E. Sec. 36	640	1	State	State		Exchange	N/A	10,000

(1)The estimated costs listed in this appendix in no way represent a formal appraised value of the land or mineral estate but are rough estimates based on sales or exchanges of lands or mineral estates with similar characteristics to those included in the WSA. The estimates are for purposes of establishing a range of potential costs to the government of acquiring nonfederal holdings and in no way represent an offer to purchase or exchange at the cost estimate included in this appendix.

SUMMARY ANALYSIS OF SPECIFIC WSA RECOMMENDATIONS

SHOSHONE/SUN VALLEY WILDERNESS

SHOSHONE / SUN VALLEY WILDERNESS



LEGEND

—— DISTRICT BOUNDARY

– – – RESOURCE AREA BOUNDARY

WILDERNESS STUDY AREA

SHOSHONE / SUN VALLEY

1. Friedman Creek
2. Deer Creek
3. Gooding City of Rocks West
4. Gooding City of Rocks East
5. Black Canyon
6. Little City of Rocks
7. Lava

SHOSHONE DISTRICT

BENNETT HILLS RESOURCE AREA

MONUMENT RESOURCE AREA

0 10 20 30 40 50

Scale in Miles

Friedman Creek Wilderness Study Area

1. The Study Area -- 9,773 acres

The Friedman Creek WSA (ID-53-5) is located in Blaine County, Idaho. The WSA includes 9,773 acres of BLM-administered lands. There is a 40 acre state inholding and eight private inholdings totaling 320 acres within the WSA (see Table 1). The WSA is bounded on the north by the Sawtooth National Forest and Challis National Forest and on the east, south and west mostly by state and private lands. BLM Road 703, the West Fork Fish Creek Road, forms a small portion of the western boundary along with an unnamed, nonsystem jeep trail.

The Friedman Creek WSA is characterized by steep mountainous terrain cut by numerous steep drainages. Drainages include Friedman Creek, Argosy Creek, Rough Creek and Trail Creek. At lower elevations, vegetation is dominated by big sagebrush interspersed with grasses. As elevation increases, Douglas-fir stands and quaking aspen groves become common.

The WSA was studied under Section 603 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) and included in the Shoshone/Sun Valley Final Environmental Impact Statement, Wilderness, filed in April 1986. Two alternatives were analyzed in the EIS: a no wilderness alternative, which is the recommendation of this report; and an all wilderness alternative.

2. Recommendation and Rationale

0 acres recommended for wilderness

9,773 acres recommended for nonwilderness

The recommendations for the Friedman Creek WSA is to release all 9,773 acres for nonwilderness uses. The environmentally preferable alternative is the all wilderness alternative. It would cause the least change from the natural environment over the long term. The recommendation would use all practical means to avoid or minimize adverse environmental impacts. All 9,773 acres of federal land within the WSA are recommended nonsuitable for wilderness designation and shown as the Friedman Creek WSA on the Friedman Creek Proposal map.

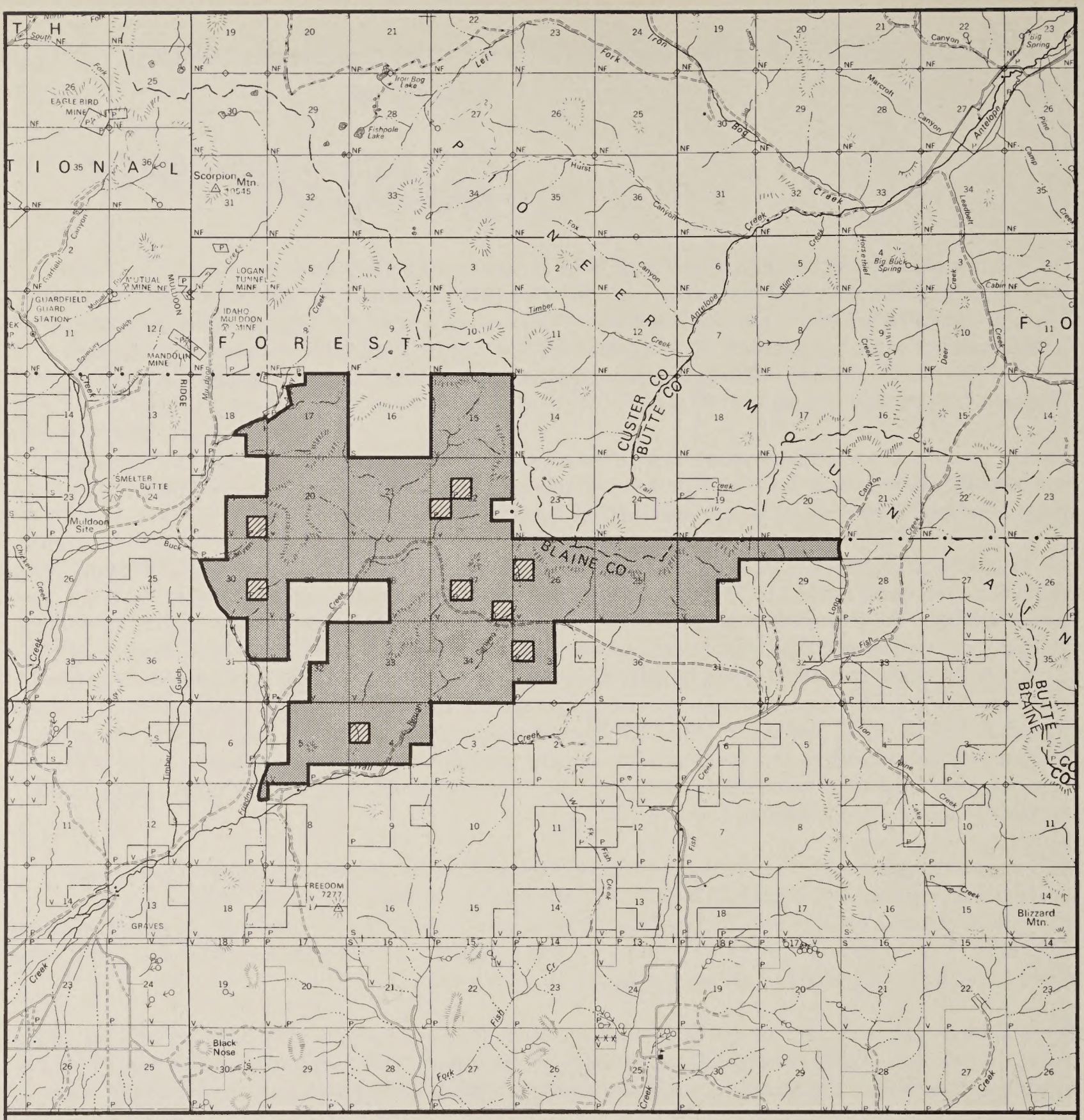
The key considerations in the recommendation were the area's high potential for mineral development, numerous inholdings which would require access if minerals were developed and the nonwilderness recommendation for the much larger, adjacent U.S. Forest Service roadless area.

The Friedman Creek WSA is located along the southern end of the Pioneer Mountains. The WSA is bounded on the north by the U.S. Forest Service Pioneer Mountains roadless area (#06-921/#14-921). The southeast part of the Pioneer Mountains area is contiguous to the Friedman Creek WSA and recommended nonsuitable for wilderness designation in the Challis National Forest Land Use Plan. According to the U.S. Forest Service evaluation, the nonsuitable part of the Pioneer Mountains roadless area contiguous to the Friedman Creek WSA includes a number of intrusions and private land in T. 3 N., R. 22 E., Sections 23 and 24; and T. 3 N., R. 23 E, Section 19. The U.S. Forest Service also recommended the southeast part of the roadless area nonsuitable to exclude areas with high and moderate mineral potential and to improve the manageability of the area recommended suitable. The same two factors were a major consideration in the recommendation for the Friedman Creek WSA.

Wilderness management for the Friedman Creek WSA would not be compatible with the nonwilderness management proposed for adjacent U.S. Forest Service lands. The Friedman Creek WSA cannot be managed to preserve existing wilderness values unless adjacent U.S. Forest Service lands are also managed as wilderness. Neither the current WSA boundary nor any conceivable proposal for a separate BLM wilderness would allow the area to stand on its own as designated wilderness.

The wilderness values of the area are further compromised by the convoluted WSA boundary and the nine separate inholdings. While the area offers opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation and appears to be natural, these values are actually a result of undeveloped private land within and adjacent to the WSA.

In addition, there are no significant wildlife species or habitats, geologic features or scientific and educational values in the area that would benefit from wilderness designation.



ID-53-5
FRIEDMAN CREEK
PROPOSAL

MARCH 1988

Table 1 -- Land Status and Acreage Summary of the Study Area
FRIEDMAN CREEK WSA

Within Wilderness Study Area

BLM (surface and subsurface)	9,773
Split Estate (BLM surface only)	0
Inholdings (state, private)	360
Total	10,133

Within the Recommended Wilderness Boundary

BLM (within WSA)	0
BLM (outside WSA)	0
Split Estate (within WSA)	0
Split Estate (outside WSA)	0
Total BLM Land Recommended for Wilderness	0
Inholdings (state, private)	0
State land (outside WSA)	0

Within the Area Not Recommended for Wilderness

BLM	9,773
Split Estate	0
Total BLM Land Not Recommended for Wilderness	9,773
Inholdings (state, private)	360

3. Criteria Considered in Developing the Wilderness Recommendations

Wilderness Characteristics

A. Naturalness

The Friedman Creek WSA is natural in appearance. Two vehicle trails (total length of one mile) and one mile of fence are the primary human imprints in the WSA. Two abandoned log cabins, at least 50 years old, are located within the Friedman Creek drainage. The cabins are not habitable and brush has partially obscured them. Near the cabins and in other widely scattered areas, abandoned mine tailing piles can be found. The impact of the mine tailings on naturalness is localized because of vegetative screening.

B. Solitude

The WSA provides opportunities for solitude. Steep slopes and the drainages within the WSA provide good visual screening. However, the steep slopes also tend to concentrate use along the creek bottoms in the drainages. With low-to-moderate use, the area provides outstanding opportunities for solitude. The area currently receives a low recreational use with the majority occurring during deer hunting season.

C. Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

The Friedman Creek WSA offers a diversity of primitive recreation opportunities. Friedman Creek supports a small trout fishery. The diverse terrain within the WSA enhances opportunities for camping and hiking. However, most of the camping opportunities within or adjacent to the WSA are located on private land.

D. Special Features

The WSA has no significant special features.

Diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System

A. Assessing the Diversity of Natural Systems and Features as Represented by Ecosystems

Wilderness designation of the Friedman Creek WSA would add an ecosystem presently represented in the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS) by three areas with 76,699 acres. There are 35 other BLM areas in the state under study with this ecosystem. This information is summarized in Table 2.

TABLE 2

Ecosystem Representation

Bailey-Kuchler Classification	NWPS Areas areas	NWPS Areas acres	Other BLM Studies areas	Other BLM Studies acres
Dry Domain/Intermountain Sagebrush Province				
		NATIONWIDE		
Sagebrush Steppe Ecosystem	3	76,699	136	4,359,340
		IDAHO		
Sagebrush Steppe Ecosystem	1	12,997	35	949,916
		NEVADA		
Sagebrush Steppe Ecosystem	1	32,407	29	1,273,919
		CALIFORNIA		
Sagebrush Steppe Ecosystem	0	0	5	152,431
		OREGON		
Sagebrush Steppe Ecosystem	0	0	67	1,983,074

B. Expanding the Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive Recreation Within a Day's Driving Time (Five Hours) of Major Population Centers

The Friedman Creek WSA is within a five-hour drive from Boise, Idaho. Table 3 summarizes the number and acreage of designated areas and other BLM study areas within a five-hour drive of the population center.

Table 3

Wilderness Opportunities for Residents of Major Population Centers

Population Centers	NWPS Areas		Other BLM Studies	
	areas	acres	areas	acres
Boise, Idaho	16	4,741,570	141	5,374,250

C. Balancing the Geographic Distribution of Wilderness Areas

The Friedman Creek WSA would not contribute to balancing the geographic distribution of areas within the NWPS.

Manageability

The Friedman Creek WSA could not be reasonably managed as wilderness. Several factors affect the area's manageability: WSA boundary configuration, nonwilderness management of adjacent non-BLM lands, potential for resource conflicts and nonfederal inholdings.

The WSA boundary is convoluted. An area of 2,040 acres in the eastern part of the WSA consists of a four-mile long finger .25 mile to .75 mile wide. A 720 acre parcel of private land protrudes into the center of the WSA creating similar WSA fingers on the east and south. The WSA is surrounded by lands proposed for or currently under nonwilderness management: U.S. Forest Service lands on the north and private and state lands on the east, west and south. Nonconforming uses on adjacent lands would degrade wilderness values in the Friedman Creek WSA.

Potential mining conflicts also affect the manageability of the Friedman Creek WSA. The WSA's mineral analysis indicates high favorability for metallic minerals (lead, zinc, silver and copper). The WSA is adjacent to the Muldoon Mining District and patented claims form the area's northwest boundary. Mining operations along the area's boundaries would degrade wilderness values in the WSA.

Nine 40 acre parcels of private and state land are scattered throughout the WSA. The parcels are currently used solely for grazing. Considering the potential for the occurrence of metallic minerals in the WSA, development could possibly occur on the private parcels, complicating wilderness management of adjacent WSA lands.

Energy and Minerals Resource Values

Except for state and private land inholdings, all surface and mineral estates in the WSA are in federal ownership and are open to mineral entry.

The Friedman Creek WSA has been classified as having moderate favorability for oil and gas (Fernette and Stratman 1983). The basis of this classification is the structural setting of the WSA including potential for development structural traps, indications of subsurface structures and the presence of hydrocarbon source and reservoir beds in the stratigraphic section. Potential for geothermal energy development is unfavorable based on analogy with similar areas in the Idaho Basin and Range Province as well as a lack of surface indications such as hot springs.

The WSA is considered to have low favorability for other leasable minerals because of its unfavorable geologic environment and lack of known occurrences (Fernette and Stratman 1983). No mineral leases are currently held on lands within the WSA.

Portions of two lode mining claims are present in the WSA and at least 50 claims exist adjacent to the WSA on the north and west. The Idaho Muldoon Mine lies about a mile northwest of the northern boundary of the WSA. The Lucky Boy Group lies outside the WSA on its edge. A mine site is present within the WSA in T. 3 N., R. 22 E., Sections 21 and 22, consisting of an adit and prospect pit. The Idaho Muldoon Mines and others in the District were moderate producers of lead, zinc and silver as well as barite as late as the 1970s.

The Friedman Creek WSA is classified as having high favorability for the metallic minerals lead, zinc, silver and copper (Fernette and Stratman 1983). This classification is based on direct evidence including mineralized outcrops, prospects and the results of geochemical analyses. The WSA is geologically similar to the adjacent Muldoon Mining District and shows a pronounced trend of mineralized structures throughout the western portion.

The WSA is classified as having a moderate favorability for barite based on the proximity to the Muldoon barite-producing district, similar geology and barium geochemical anomalies adjacent to the WSA. The WSA has low favorability for occurrence of other locatable resources.

Gravels are abundant in the WSA and local limestone and quartzite have potential both as building stone and in aggregate production. The distance to market precludes these minerals from having commercial value.

Impacts on Resources

The following comparative impact table summarizes the effects on pertinent resources for all the alternatives considered including designation or nondesignation of the entire area as wilderness.

Table 4
Comparative Summary of the Impacts by Alternative
WSA ID-53-5 (FRIEDMAN CREEK)

ISSUE TOPICS	PROPOSED ACTION (NO WILDERNESS/NO ACTION)	ALL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE
Impacts on Wilderness Values	The area's wilderness values of size, naturalness and opportunities for solitude would be lost.	All wilderness values would receive long-term Congressional protection. Wilderness values would be slightly enhanced on all 9,733 acres of the Friedman Creek WSA.
Impacts on Recreational ORV Use	Although the area would be more accessible, recreational ORV use would remain below 1,000 visitor days annually. There would be no significant impact on recreational ORV use.	Recreational ORV use of 100 visitor days would be forgone annually. The impacts of shifting this use to other public lands would be negligible.
Impacts on Development of Mineral Resources	Potential mineral resources would be available for development. This includes high favorability for metallic minerals and moderate favorability for oil and gas and barite. There would be no impact on development of mineral resources.	Development of potential mineral resources would be forgone. This includes high favorability for metallic minerals and moderate favorability for oil and gas and barite.
Impacts on Grazing Facility Maintenance and Construction	There would be no impact on grazing facility maintenance and construction.	There would be no impact on grazing facility maintenance and construction.

Local Social and Economic Considerations

Social and economic factors were not considered significant issues in the study.

Summary of WSA-Specific Public Comments

Public involvement has occurred throughout the wilderness review process. During public review of the Draft EIS four comments supporting wilderness designation of the Friedman Creek WSA were received. These comments contained no supporting reasons for their position. One comment was received opposing wilderness designation of this WSA. The comment contained no supporting reasons for the position.

The Board of Camas County Commissioners opposed any more wilderness in Idaho. The Idaho Department of Health and Welfare, Department of Water Quality, Office of Attorney General, the U.S. Department of Fish and Wildlife, National Park Service, Bureau of Reclamation and the Environmental Protection Agency commented on the Draft EIS. None of their comments specifically addressed the Friedman Creek WSA.

Little City of Rocks Wilderness Study Area

1. The Study Area -- 5,875 acres

The Little City of Rocks WSA (ID-54-5) is located in Gooding County, Idaho. The WSA includes 5,875 acres of BLM-administered lands. There are no split estate lands within the area. There is a 640 acre inholding of state land within the WSA (see Table 1). Portions of the WSA's boundaries are formed by the following dirt roads: on the west and south by BLM Road 2412, the Burnt Willow Road; and on the north by County Road 2401, the Crist Cabin Road. The eastern boundary is formed by three materials sites and a power line right-of-way parallel to State Highway 46. A portion of the southern boundary follows a private property line. The WSA is one of five within the Mount Bennett Hills.

The Mount Bennett Hills are a belt of rolling foothills between the Sawtooth Mountains to the north and the Snake River Plains to the south. The major portion of the WSA is a gently sloping plain with several rhyolite bluffs. The WSA's south-central portion contains an aggregation of wind and water eroded rhyolite columns, collectively known as the Little City of Rocks.

The dominant vegetation of the WSA is sagebrush and grasses. Chokecherry and willows are found in shaded canyons of the Little City of Rocks. There is a small grove of aspen on the north-facing slope of the WSA's northern edge. Elevations range from 4,458 to 5,758 feet.

Several species of wildlife including elk, deer, coyote, birds of prey and upland game are found in the WSA.

The WSA was studied under Section 603 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) and included in the Shoshone/Sun Valley Final Environmental Impact Statement, Wilderness, filed in April 1986. Two alternatives were analyzed in the EIS: a no wilderness alternative, which is the recommendation of this report; and an all wilderness alternative.

2. Recommendation and Rationale

0 acres recommended for wilderness

5,875 acres recommended for nonwilderness

The recommendation for the Little City of Rocks WSA is to release all 5,875 acres for nonwilderness uses. The environmentally preferable alternative is the all wilderness alternative. It would cause the least change from the natural environment over the long term. The recommendation would use all practical means to avoid or minimize adverse environmental impacts. All 5,875 acres of federal land within the WSA are recommended nonsuitable for wilderness designation and are shown as the Little City of Rocks WSA on the Little City of Rocks Proposal map.

The quality of the wilderness values was the key consideration in the recommendation. While the WSA contained the wilderness values necessary for study, they are not considered to merit inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS). There are no significant wildlife species or habitats, nor scientific or educational values in the area that would benefit from wilderness designation. There are geologic features in the area. However, similar geologic wilderness values of higher quality are recommended for wilderness designation within the nearby Gooding City of Rocks East and West WSAs.

The area's name is derived from the unusual rock formations concentrated in one major drainage in the south-central part of the WSA. Drainages dissecting alternating bands of hard and soft tuff and the weathering processes of freezing and thawing created the unusual rock formations that appear like stacks of coins, mushroom caps, arches, fins and pillars called "hoodoos." The formations cover approximately 2,000 acres (about 34 percent) of the Little City of Rocks WSA. These formations are similar to those found in the Gooding City of Rocks East and West WSAs but cover a much smaller area. The welded tuff rock formations in the Gooding City of Rocks East and West WSAs cover 12,000 acres, an area larger than the entire Little City of Rocks WSA.

The Little City of Rocks WSA is essentially natural. Two vehicle trails extend into the WSA but impacts on the area's naturalness are primarily due to sights and sounds outside the WSA. State Highway 46 and a power transmission line run along the eastern boundary of the WSA. The Gooding County Highway Department occasionally excavates materials from a gravel pit between Flat Top Butte and the northeast edge of the WSA. The Department has a right-of-way for the pit.

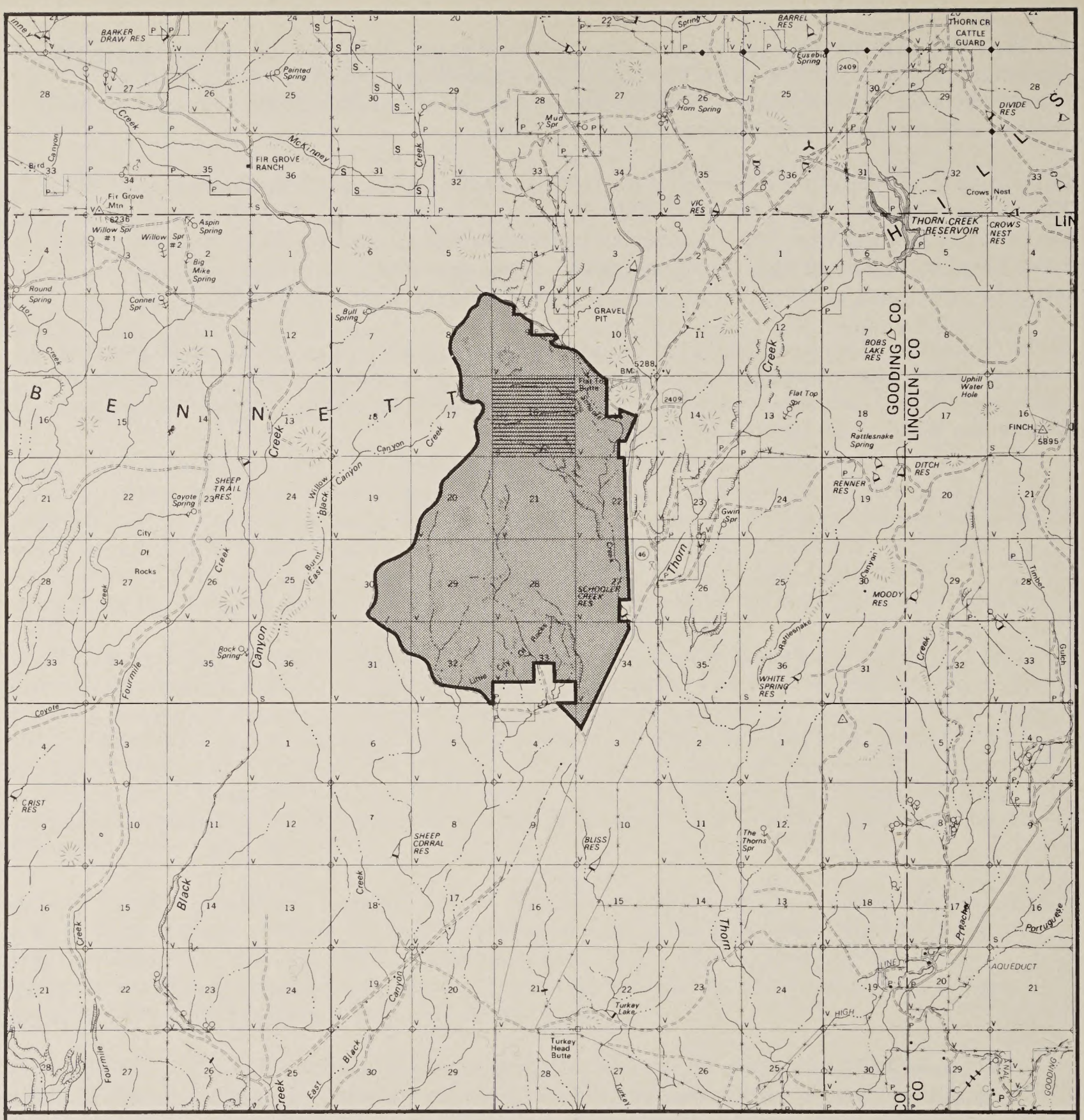
Opportunities for solitude are available in parts of the WSA, primarily the south-central part among the welded tuff rock formations. The rock formations are also the focal point for the primitive recreation opportunities. Most existing recreation use consists of day hiking, pleasure driving and mountain bike riding. The Little City of Rocks is easily accessible by road from State Highway 46. The recommendation would allow this type of recreation and access to continue. Motorized recreationists would have an opportunity to view and appreciate the rock formations. Those seeking similar, but nonmotorized opportunities, could visit the Gooding City of Rocks area.

The flat basalt plateau areas that comprise most of the WSA provide lower quality opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation because of the lack of topographic screening and interesting scenery. The eastern segment of the WSA between the edge of the plateau and State Highway 46 offers virtually no opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation. In addition, the relatively small size of the Little City of Rocks WSA diminishes the overall quality of opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation.

The Little City of Rocks WSA and Gooding City of Rocks East and West WSAs are all examples of the Sagebrush Province/Sagebrush Steppe Ecosystem. This Bailey-Kuchler classification ecosystem is represented in the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS) in Idaho in the Craters of the Moon Wilderness administered by the National Park Service (NPS).

Designation of any one of the three City of Rocks WSAs would add diversity in landforms to the NWPS. Through the wilderness study process, it was determined that the designation of 19,350 acres in the Gooding City of Rocks East and West WSAs represents a better opportunity to preserve the types of wilderness values found in the Bennett Hills (landforms, natural values, opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation and special features) than would designation of the Little City of Rocks WSA.

At the present time, there is little threat to the existing naturalness of the area. There are no known or projected activities, only minor geothermal potential, no known mineral potential and no valid rights of others in the WSA. Therefore, even without wilderness designation, the quality and level of values now found in the WSA are not expected to significantly change.



RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS

RECOMMENDED FOR NONWILDERNESS

LAND OUTSIDE WSA RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS

SPLIT ESTATE

STATE

PRIVATE

1 0 1 2 3

Scale in Miles

ID-54-5
LITTLE CITY OF ROCKS
PROPOSAL

MARCH 1988

Table 1 -- Land Status and Acreage Summary of the Study Area
LITTLE CITY OF ROCKS WSA

Within Wilderness Study Area

BLM (surface and subsurface)	5,875
Split Estate (BLM surface only)	0
Inholdings (state, private)	640
Total	6,515

Within the Recommended Wilderness Boundary

BLM (within WSA)	0
BLM (outside WSA)	0
Split Estate (within WSA)	0
Split Estate (outside WSA)	0
Total BLM Land Recommended for Wilderness	0
Inholdings (state, private)	0
State land (outside WSA)	0

Within the Area Not Recommended for Wilderness

BLM	5,875
Split Estate	0
Total BLM Land Not Recommended for Wilderness	5,875
Inholdings (state, private)	640

3. Criteria Considered in Developing the Wilderness Recommendations

Wilderness Characteristics

A. Naturalness

The Little City of Rocks WSA appears essentially natural. Two vehicle trails extend into the WSA for 1.4 miles; both receive light use. Several tracks from trail bike use can be seen within the WSA. These vehicle trails would revegetate if vehicle use were curtailed. These imprints are widely scattered and do not detract appreciably from the naturalness of the WSA.

Two developments adjacent to the WSA have a slight affect on perceptions of naturalness within the area. State Highway 46 parallels the eastern boundary of the WSA. Although a high bluff along the eastern edge of the area screens the sights and sounds of the highway from most of the WSA, the portion of the area between the bluffs and the eastern boundary (approximately 15 percent of the total WSA) is slightly affected by the presence of the highway. Outside the WSA's southeast corner, a circular gravel pit has been developed. At present, the gravel pit is not being used. Topography screens the pit from most of the WSA.

B. Solitude

In portions of the WSA, opportunities for solitude are outstanding. Topography, the WSA's boundary configuration and some vegetative screening combine to provide an opportunity for a limited number of visitors to avoid the sights and sounds of other visitors within the WSA. Topography includes two major types: (1) a rolling sagebrush plain surrounded by basalt bluffs; and (2) canyons rimmed with aggregations of tall, eroded columns of volcanic tuff. The rock formations and basalt bluffs allow visitors to disperse and enjoy seclusion in the canyons. The sagebrush plain provides a lower quality of solitude since visitors can see each other over a greater distance.

C. Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

The Little City of Rocks WSA offers a diversity of primitive recreation opportunities. Among them are photography, camping and nature study. Although the size of the WSA limits extensive hiking, the WSA offers high-quality opportunities for day or overnight hikes. The area's unusual, easily accessible geologic features are a common destination point for both motorized and nonmotorized recreationists.

D. Special Features

In the Little City of Rocks WSA, spectacular landforms occur within a single drainage and include columns, hoodoos, arches and monoliths. These landforms display weathering processes and structural anomalies that are picturesque and unusual.

Diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System

A. Assessing the Diversity of Natural Systems and Features as Represented by Ecosystems

Wilderness designation of the Little City of Rocks WSA would add an ecosystem presently represented in the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS) by one designated area with 30,245 acres. There are 11 other BLM study areas in the state under study with this ecosystem. This information is summarized on Table 2.

TABLE 2

Ecosystem Representation

Bailey-Kuchler Classification	NWPS Areas areas	NWPS Areas acres	Other BLM Studies areas	Other BLM Studies acres
Intermountain Sagebrush Province				
		NATIONWIDE		
Desert-Vegetation Largely Absent Ecosystem	1	30,245	12	870,403
		IDAHO		
Desert-Vegetation Largely Absent Ecosystem	1	30,245	11	646,687
		NEVADA		
Desert-Vegetation Largely Absent Ecosystem	0	0	1	223,716

B. Expanding the Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive Recreation Within a Day's Driving Time (Five Hours) of Major Population Centers

The Little City of Rocks WSA is within a five-hour drive of two major population centers. Table 3 summarizes the number and acreage of designated areas and other BLM study areas within a five-hour drive of the population center.

Table 3

Wilderness Opportunities for Residents of Major Population Centers

Population Centers	NWPS Areas		Other BLM Studies	
	areas	acres	areas	acres
Boise, Idaho/Salt Lake City, Utah[1]	16	4,741,570	141	5,374,250

[1]Salt Lake City, Utah, and vicinity includes the cities of Provo, Orem and Ogden, Utah.

C. Balancing the Geographic Distribution of Wilderness Areas

The Little City of Rocks WSA would not contribute to balancing the geographic distribution of areas within the NWPS. The NPS-administered Craters of the Moon Wilderness (43,243 acres) representing a similar ecosystem is a two-hour drive to the northeast. The Little City of Rocks WSA, however, would add a landform to the NWPS that is very different from that represented in the Craters of the Moon Wilderness.

Manageability

The Little City of Rocks WSA can be managed reasonably as wilderness to preserve values now present in the area. Conflicts with other resources and uses are minimal. The state land inholding in the area is used solely for grazing. Based on the mineral resources analysis, no mineral development on this parcel is anticipated.

The vehicle route to the Little City of Rocks Canyon on the WSA's southern boundary present a minor potential manageability conflict. This vehicle route is used by recreationists going to the Little City of Rocks to hike and to view the rock formations. Wilderness management would require physical blockage of the route on the wilderness boundary, signing and patrolling the area to prevent vehicle use in the canyon.

Energy and Minerals Resource Values

Except for the state land inholding, all surface and mineral estates in the WSA are in federal ownership and are open to mineral entry. The Little City of Rocks WSA has low potential for oil, gas and coal, and moderate potential for geothermal energy. This classification is based on U.S. Geologic Survey studies on the WSAs to the west.

Based on the unfavorable geologic environment, the WSA is classified as having low potential for other leasable minerals. There are no mineral leases in the WSA. The WSA is classified as having low potential for locatable mineral resources. This classification is based on the geology and absence of mining claims and historic activity. There are no mining claims in the WSA.

Building stone exists in limited quantities within the Little City of Rocks WSA. This material has produced little interest and no sales. The stone is limited in quantity, is relatively inaccessible and adequate sources of similar building stone are available in other locations. There are no other known saleable minerals within the Little City of Rocks WSA.

Impacts on Resources

The following comparative impact table summarizes the effects on pertinent resources for all the alternatives considered including designation or nondesignation of the entire area as wilderness.

Table 4
Comparative Summary of the Impacts by Alternative
WSA ID-54-5 (LITTLE CITY OF ROCKS)

ISSUE TOPICS	PROPOSED ACTION (NO WILDERNESS/NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE)	ALL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE
Impacts on Wilderness Values	The WSA's naturalness would be lost in areas of concentrated ORV use. Recreational ORV use would reduce opportunities for solitude.	All wilderness values would receive long-term Congressional protection. All wilderness values would be maintained. Naturalness and opportunities for solitude would improve slightly.
Impacts on Recreational ORV Use	There would be no impact on recreational ORV use.	Recreational ORV use of 1,500 visitor days would be foregone annually. Impacts of shifting this use to other public lands would be negligible.
Impacts on Development of Mineral Resources	Potential mineral resources would be available for development. This includes moderate to high potential for low temperature geothermal resources. There would be no impact to development of mineral resources.	Development of potential mineral resources would be foregone. This includes moderate to high potential for low temperature geothermal resources.
Impacts on Grazing Facility Maintenance and Construction	There would be no impact on grazing facility maintenance and construction.	There would be no impact on grazing facility maintenance and construction.

Local Social and Economic Considerations

Social and economic factors were not considered a significant issue in the study.

Summary of WSA-Specific Public Comments

Public involvement has occurred throughout the wilderness review process. During public review of the Draft EIS, 26 comments supporting wilderness designation of the Little City of Rocks WSA were received. Seven of these contained no supporting reasons for their position. Comments with supporting reasons addressed the area's wilderness values, lack of resource conflicts, manageability and specific wilderness resources including wildlife, recreation, scenery and cultural resources and the area's preservation values. Six comments addressed the area contributing to expanding diversity in the NWPS. Nine comments addressed the opportunity to designate a significant wilderness complex in the Mount Bennett Hills. The area's small size and easy access were also given as reasons supporting wilderness designation.

Five comments were received opposing wilderness designation of the area. Two of these contained no supporting reasons for their position. Comments with supporting reasons stated that the area looks like the rest of Idaho, is best suited for other uses, or is not unique.

The Board of Camas County Commissioners opposed any more wilderness in Idaho. The Idaho Department of Health and Welfare, Department of Water Quality and Office of the Attorney General, the U.S. Department Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service, Bureau of Reclamation and the Environmental Protection Agency letters contained no WSA-specific comments.

Black Canyon Wilderness Study Area

1. The Study Area -- 10,371 acres

The Black Canyon WSA (ID-54-6) is located in Gooding County, Idaho. The WSA includes 10,371 acres of BLM-administered lands. There are no split estate lands within the areas. There is a 640 acre inholding of state land within the WSA (see Table 1). Portions of the WSA's boundaries are formed by the following dirt roads: on the west and the north by BLM and County Road 2401, the Crist Cabin Road; and on the east by BLM Road 2412, the Burnt Willow Road. An old cat line forms the remainder of the western boundary. The southern boundary follows section lines. The WSA is one of five WSAs within the Mount Bennett Hills, a rolling belt of foothills between the Sawtooth Mountains to the north and the Snake River Plains to the south.

Most of the WSA is a flat prairie which rises gently to the north. In the central portion of the WSA, Black Canyon and East Black Canyon come to within one-third mile of each other, leaving a narrow strip of prairie table top between them. The WSA's northern half is composed of rolling hills broken by canyons varying in size. The west edge of the WSA has unusual rock formations of weathered rhyolite. Elevations range from 4,360 to 5,484 feet. The dominant vegetation is sagebrush and grasses. There are some pockets of willow and shrubs along some of the intermittent drainages.

Several species of wildlife including elk, deer, antelope, coyotes, birds of prey, upland game birds and black bears are found in the WSA.

The WSA was studied under Section 603 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) and included in the Shoshone/Sun Valley Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), Wilderness, filed in April 1986. Two alternatives were analyzed in the EIS: a no wilderness alternative, which is the recommendation of this report; and an all wilderness alternative.

2. Recommendation and Rationale

0 acres recommended for wilderness

10,371 acres recommended for nonwilderness

The recommendation for the Black Canyon WSA is to release all 10,371 acres for nonwilderness uses. The environmentally preferable alternative is the all wilderness alternative. It would cause the least change from the natural environment over the long term. The recommendation would use all practical means to avoid or minimize adverse environmental impacts. All 10,371 acres of federal land within the WSA are recommended nonsuitable for wilderness designation and are shown as the Black Canyon WSA on the Black Canyon Proposal map.

The quality of the wilderness values was the key consideration in the recommendation. While the WSA contained the wilderness values necessary for study, they are not considered to merit inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS). There are no significant wildlife species or habitats, scientific or educational values in the area that would benefit from wilderness designation. There are geologic features in the area. However, similar geologic-based wilderness values of higher quality are recommended for wilderness designation within the nearby Gooding City of Rocks East and West WSAs.

Rock formations composed of welded volcanic tuffs are found along the west-central edge of the WSA boundary and in parts of Black Canyon and Burnt Willow Canyon. The formations look like stacks of coins, mushroom caps, arches, fins and pillars called "hoodoos." The formations are similar to those found in the Gooding City of Rocks East and West WSAs but cover a much smaller area. The welded tuff rock formations in the Gooding City of Rocks East and West WSAs cover 12,000 acres, an area larger then the entire Black Canyon WSA.

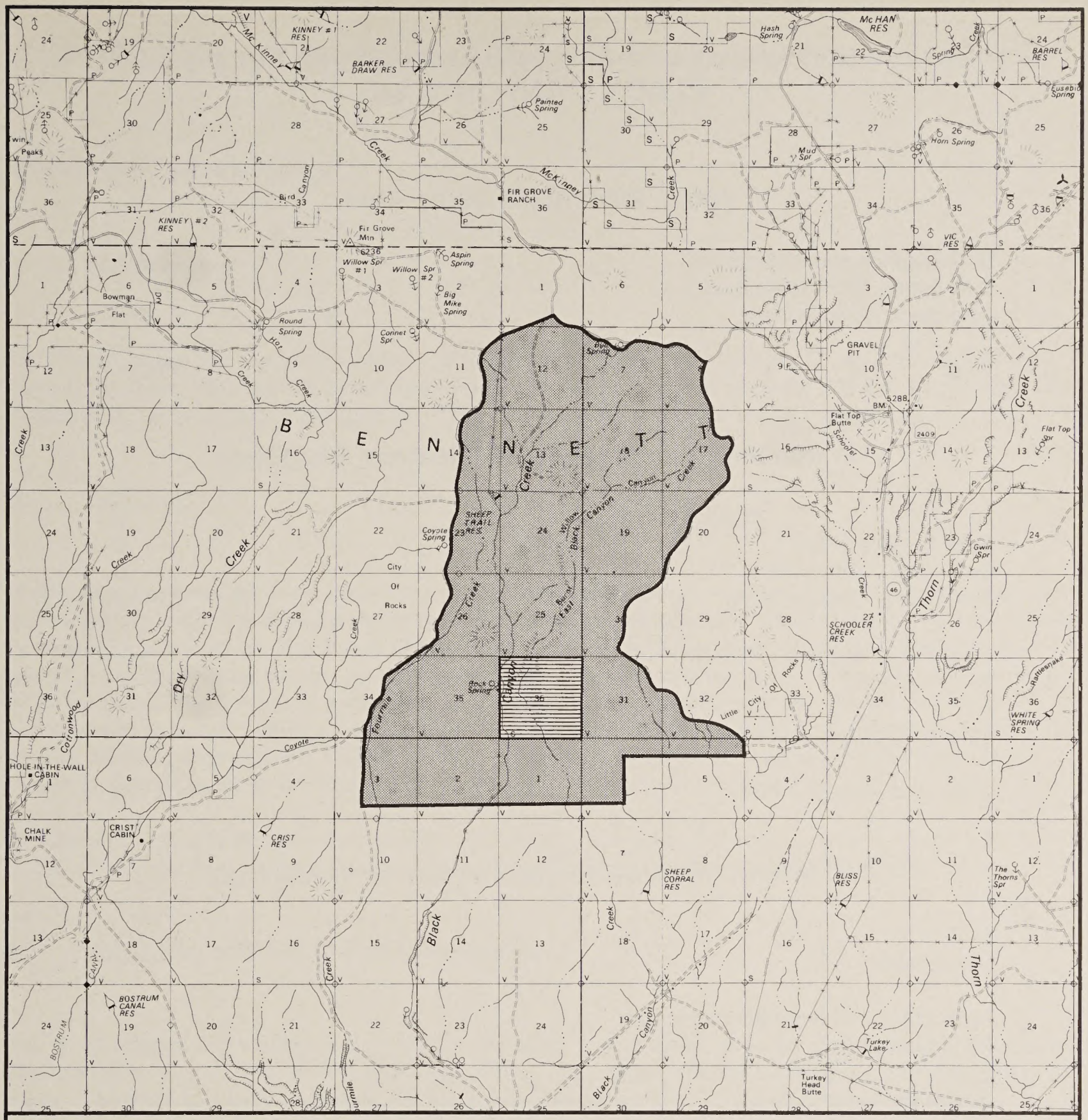
The most unusual and highest quality wilderness values in the Black Canyon WSA center on these welded tuff rock formations. These areas comprise about one-third of the Black Canyon WSA. Opportunities for solitude are found in these parts of the WSA. These areas are also the focal point for recreationists visiting the area because of the scenery of the rock formations and canyons.

The WSA generally appears natural but there are several site-specific signs of man. Existing human imprints in the WSA are low impact range developments. These are scattered throughout the area.

The Black Canyon WSA, Little City of Rocks WSA and the Gooding City of Rocks East and West WSAs are all examples of the Sagebrush Province/Sagebrush Steppe Ecosystem (3130-49). In Idaho, this Bailey-Kuchler classification ecosystem is represented in the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS) in the Craters of the Moon Wilderness administered by the National Park Service (NPS).

Designation of any one of the four WSAs containing the welded volcanic tuff formations would add diversity in landforms to the NWPS. Through the wilderness study process it was determined the designation of 19,350 acres in the Gooding City of Rocks East and West WSAs represents a more significant opportunity to preserve the types of wilderness values found in the Bennett Hills (landforms, natural values, opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation and special features) than would designation of the Black Canyon WSA.

At the present time, there is little threat to the existing naturalness of the area. There are no known or projected activities, no known mineral potential, little geothermal potential and no valid rights of others in the WSA. Therefore, even without wilderness designation, the quality and level of values now found in the WSA are not expected to change significantly.



ID-54-6
BLACK CANYON
PROPOSAL

MARCH 1988

Table 1 -- Land Status and Acreage Summary of the Study Area
BLACK CANYON WSA

Within Wilderness Study Area

BLM (surface and subsurface)	10,371
Split Estate (BLM surface only)	0
Inholdings (state, private)	640
Total	11,011

Within the Recommended Wilderness Boundary

BLM (within WSA)	0
BLM (outside WSA)	0
Split Estate (within WSA)	0
Split Estate (outside WSA)	0
Total BLM Land Recommended for Wilderness	0
Inholdings (state, private)	0
State land (outside WSA)	0

Within the Area Not Recommended for Wilderness

BLM	10,371
Split Estate	0
Total BLM Land Not Recommended for Wilderness	10,371
Inholdings (state, private)	640

3. Criteria Considered in Developing the Wilderness Recommendations

Wilderness Characteristics

A. Naturalness

The Black Canyon WSA generally appears natural but there are several site-specific signs of man including barbed wire fence, old chemical brush control treatment areas, a developed spring and a dirt reservoir. The developments are scattered throughout the WSA and have little impact on overall naturalness.

B. Solitude

Outstanding opportunities for solitude exist within the two main canyons in the WSA. The rock towers and numerous side canyons provide screening between visitors and allow several visitors to be in the area without encountering one another. The broad sloping plain that occupies the majority of the WSA also provides opportunities for solitude but the quality of solitude would be less if many visitors were in that portion of the WSA because of the scarcity of topographic or vegetative screening. The opportunities are due to the remoteness and lack of human activity in the area and are not due to any intrinsic values unique to the WSA. Overall, these opportunities for solitude are less numerous and of a lower quality than those found in the nearby Gooding City of Rocks East and West WSAs.

Outside sights of agricultural and community land patterns are visible from many portions of the WSA. These developments are located at a distance and do not detract significantly from a feeling of solitude.

C. Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

The Black Canyon WSA offers some primitive recreation opportunities, although most visitors to the general area choose to visit the Gooding City of Rocks WSAs. The opportunities include hiking, camping and nature study. The WSA also offers opportunities for hunting big game. Most of the hunters, however, use motorized vehicles.

D. Special Features

The WSA has no significant special features.

Diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System

A. Assessing the Diversity of Natural Systems and Features as Represented by Ecosystems

Wilderness designation of the Black Canyon WSA would add an ecosystem presently represented in the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS) by three areas with 76,699 acres. There are 35 other BLM areas in the state under study with this ecosystem. This information is summarized in Table 2.

TABLE 2

Ecosystem Representation

Bailey-Kuchler Classification	NWPS Areas areas	NWPS Areas acres	Other BLM Studies areas	Other BLM Studies acres
Dry Domain/Intermountain Sagebrush Province				
		NATIONWIDE		
Sagebrush Steppe Ecosystem	3	76,699	136	4,359,340
		IDAHO		
Sagebrush Steppe Ecosystem	1	12,997	35	949,916
		NEVADA		
Sagebrush Steppe Ecosystem	1	32,407	29	1,273,919
		CALIFORNIA		
Sagebrush Steppe Ecosystem	0	0	5	152,431
		OREGON		
Sagebrush Steppe Ecosystem	0	0	67	1,983,074

B. Expanding the Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive Recreation within a Day's Driving Time (Five Hours) of Major Population Centers

The Black Canyon WSA is within a five-hour drive from Boise, Idaho. Table 3 summarizes the number and acreage of designated areas and other BLM study areas within a five-hour drive of the population center.

Table 3

Wilderness Opportunities for Residents of Major Population Centers

Population Centers	NWPS Areas		Other BLM Studies	
	areas	acres	areas	acres
Boise, Idaho	16	4,741,570	141	5,374,250

C. Balancing the Geographic Distribution of Wilderness Areas

The Black Canyon WSA would not contribute to balancing the geographic distribution of areas within the NWPS.

Manageability

The Black Canyon WSA is manageable as wilderness. The size of the WSA and proximity to the Gooding City of Rocks East WSA enhances the area's manageability.

Conflicts with other resources and uses are minimal. The state land inholding is used solely for grazing. Based on the mineral resource analysis, no mineral development on this parcel is anticipated.

Vehicle use of the two cherry-stem roads into the WSA could slightly complicate wilderness management. However, use could be limited to livestock operators only. The roads would be closed to all other users. Livestock operators would use the roads approximately ten times per year to maintain a fence. Therefore, impacts on opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation would be limited.

Energy and Minerals Resource Values

Except for the state land inholding, all surface and mineral estates in the WSA are in federal ownership and are open to mineral entry. The Black Canyon WSA has low potential for oil and gas, coal and moderate potential for geothermal energy. These classifications are based on geology and U.S. Geological Survey studies on the WSAs to the west.

The WSA is classified as having low potential for other leasable minerals based on the unfavorable geologic environment. There are no mineral leases in the WSA. The WSA is classified as having low potential for locatable mineral resources. This classification is based on the geology and absence of mining claims and historic activity. There are no mining claims in the WSA.

Building stone exists in limited quantities within the Black Canyon WSA. This material has produced little interest and no known sales. It is limited in quantity and relatively inaccessible. Adequate sources of similar building stone are available at other locations. There are no other known saleable minerals within the Black Canyon WSA.

Impacts on Resources

The following comparative impact table summarizes the effects on pertinent resources for all the alternatives considered including designation or nondesignation of the entire area as wilderness.

Table 4
Comparative Summary of the Impacts by Alternative
WSA ID-54-6 (BLACK CANYON)

ISSUE TOPICS	PROPOSED ACTION (NO WILDERNESS/NO ACTION)	ALL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE
Impacts on Wilderness Values	In the long term, the addition of a dirt reservoir would reduce naturalness slightly in the western portion of the WSA. The naturalness of the remainder of the WSA would be retained.	All wilderness values would receive long-term Congressional protection. All wilderness values would be maintained. There would be a slight improvement in the area's naturalness and opportunities for solitude. An additional range development (a dirt reservoir) would reduce naturalness slightly in the western portion of the WSA.
Impacts on Recreational ORV Use	There would be no impact on recreational ORV use.	Recreational ORV use of 200 visitor days would be foregone annually. Impacts of shifting this use to other public lands would be negligible.
Impacts on Development of Mineral Resources	Potential mineral resources would be available for development. This includes moderate potential for geothermal resources. There would be no impact on development of mineral resources.	Development of potential mineral resources would be foregone. This includes moderate potential for geothermal resources.
Impacts on Grazing Facility Maintenance and Construction	There would be no impact on grazing facility maintenance and construction.	There would be no impact on grazing facility maintenance and construction.

Local Social and Economic Considerations

Social and economic factors were not considered a significant issue in the study.

Summary of WSA-Specific Public Comments

Public involvement has occurred throughout the wilderness review process. During public review of the Draft EIS, 48 comments supporting wilderness designation of the Black Canyon WSA were received. Seven of these contained no supporting reasons for their position. Comments with supporting reasons addressed the area's wilderness values and quality, the lack of resource conflicts, manageability, specific wilderness resources including recreation, wildlife, geologic and cultural resources and the area's preservation value. Seven comments addressed the area contributing to expanding diversity in the NWPS. Eleven comments addressed the opportunity to designate a significant wilderness complex in the Mount Bennett Hills.

Six comments were received opposing wilderness designation of the area. Three of these contained no supporting reasons for their position. Comments with supporting reasons stated the area is better suited for other uses, the area looks like the rest of Idaho or the area is not unique.

The Board of Camas County Commissioners opposed any more wilderness in Idaho. The Idaho Department of Health and Welfare, Department of Water Quality, Office of the Attorney General, the U.S. Department of Fish and Wildlife, National Park Service, Bureau of Reclamation and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency commented on the Draft EIS. None of their comments specifically addressed the Black Canyon WSA.

Gooding City of Rocks East Wilderness Study Area

1. The Study Area -- 14,743 acres

The Gooding City of Rocks East WSA (ID-54-8A) is located in Gooding County 14 miles northwest of Gooding, Idaho. The WSA includes 14,743 acres of BLM-administered lands. There are no split estate lands or inholdings within the area (see Table 1). The WSA's boundary is primarily formed by the following roads: on the west by an unnamed, nonsystem jeep trail; on the north by County Road 2402, the Davis Mountain Road; on the east and south by BLM and County Road 2401, the Crist Cabin Road. Portions of the western, northern and southern boundaries are formed by state and private lands. The WSA is one of five WSAs within the Mount Bennett Hills.

The Mount Bennett Hills are a rolling belt of foothills between the Sawtooth Mountains to the north and the Snake River Plain to the south. The southeastern portion of the WSA is composed of a series of deep canyons carved into rhyolite. Throughout these canyons are rhyolite columns which rise more than 100 feet. This area is known as the City of Rocks. Streams dissecting alternating bands of hard and soft tuff and the weathering processes of freezing and thawing helped create unusual rock formations that resemble stacks of coins, mushroom caps, arches, fins and pillars called "hoodoos." Although the rock types are not the same, the rock formations in the City of Rocks rival those found in Utah's Arches National Park.

Dry Creek Canyon, on the western side of the City of Rocks, has a perennial stream with large sections of pristine riparian vegetation. The northern portion of the WSA is a rolling prairie dissected by several intermittent stream drainages. Several basalt bluffs dominate portions of the prairie landscape.

The WSA's dominant vegetation is sagebrush and annual and perennial grasses. More shaded sections of the canyons support pockets of willows, aspen, cottonwood, serviceberry and chokecherry.

Wildlife species within the WSA include elk, deer, coyotes, bears, birds of prey and upland game birds. A population of cutthroat trout lives in Dry Creek.

The WSA was studied under Section 603 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) and included in the Shoshone/Sun Valley Final Environment Impact Statement (EIS) Wilderness, filed in April 1986. Three alternatives were analyzed in the EIS: a partial wilderness alternative, which is the recommendation of this report; an all wilderness alternative; and a nonwilderness alternative.

2. Recommendation and Rationale

13,063 acres recommended for wilderness

1,680 acres recommended for nonwilderness

The recommendation for the Gooding City of Rocks East WSA is to designate 13,063 acres as wilderness to release 1,680 acres for other uses. The environmentally preferable alternative is the all wilderness alternative. It would cause the least change from the natural environment over the long term. The recommendation would use all practical means to avoid or minimize adverse environmental impacts.

The recommendation for wilderness will also apply to any additional adjacent nonfederal lands acquired through purchase or exchange with willing owners. A 640 acre state land parcel cherry-stem in the northern half of the WSA, 245 acres east of the road dissecting the state land section on the WSA's west boundary and the 146 acre private land parcel adjacent to the south boundary of the WSA have been identified for acquisition. All 14,743 acres of federal land within the WSA are shown as the Gooding City of Rocks East WSA on the Gooding City of Rocks East Proposal map.

Wilderness designation will add a high-quality, diverse area to the wilderness system. The wilderness values are exceptional. The recommended part of the WSA exhibits special ecological, geological and cultural features of scientific and educational values which would benefit from wilderness designation. The Gooding City of Rocks East WSA would add landforms currently not represented in the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS) in Idaho. The area recommended as suitable does not include resource values or uses that would significantly conflict with wilderness management or negatively impact the area's wilderness characteristics.

Dry Creek, a spring-fed perennial stream, cuts through the center of the 13,063 acres recommended as suitable. Dry Creek has been identified as a potential Research Natural Area (RNA) and Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) to represent riparian, aquatic and terrestrial habitats of the southern slope of the Bennett Hills. Dry Creek has a very high diversity of invertebrates as well as a reported rainbow/cutthroat trout hybrid. Beaver ponds are found near the mouth of the canyon. Dry Creek is a sage grouse winter use area and parts of it lie within sage grouse strutting grounds. The southern part of Dry Creek is a deer winter range. Well-developed riparian vegetation includes black cottonwood, red-osier dogwood and willow species. In addition to the aquatic and riparian habitats, a number of range habitat types are also present. Dominant shrubs in these types include basin big sagebrush, Wyoming big sagebrush, low sagebrush and antelope bitterbrush. The dominant grass is bluebunch wheatgrass. Slanderbush buckwheat and Sandberg's bluegrass are also present. Although grazed in the past, the lower portion of Dry Creek was fenced to protect the aquatic habitat and the vegetation is recovering. Other wildlife species found in the 13,063 acres recommended suitable include elk, sage grouse, chukars, raptors, coyotes, black bear, bobcat and mountain quail.

Cultural values in the area recommended suitable include rock art petroglyphs and surface lithic scatters. The lithic scatters consist of obsidian waste flakes and projectile points. Obsidian is a volcanic glass prized by early man for making arrow and spear points as well as tools and ceremonial devices. Some layers of the welded tuff formations are composed solely of obsidian.

The area recommended suitable for wilderness designation is essentially pristine. Several sections of fence and three developed springs are located on the periphery of the area. The four vehicles trails, totaling approximately 3.5 miles, entering the area from the north, east and west would revegetate and return to a more natural condition if vehicle use were restricted or eliminated. Within the area recommended suitable, the imprints of humans are minimal and their impact on naturalness diminished by the screening effects of the area's topography.

The 13,063 acres of the Gooding City of Rocks East WSA recommended suitable for wilderness offer outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation. The area's large size, the "City of Rocks" formations and the steep gorges and dense riparian vegetation within most of the canyons provide endless opportunities for visitors to disperse and avoid the sights and sounds of others. The recreational values of this area are exceptional. Primitive recreation opportunities include hiking, camping, horseback riding, climbing, fishing, hunting, nature study and photography.

The Intermountain Sagebrush Province/Sagebrush Steppe Ecosystem (3130-49) is the ecosystem represented in this part of the WSA. In Idaho, this Bailey-Kuchler classification ecosystem is represented in the Craters of the Moon Wilderness administered by the National Park Service (NPS). However, the landforms in the Craters of the Moon Wilderness are vastly different from the landforms represented in the Gooding City of Rocks East WSA. The Craters of the Moon Wilderness is an outstanding example of Snake River Plain desert lava flow ecosystems while the Gooding City of Rocks area consists of thousands of acres of welded volcanic tuff rock formations and basalt plateaus cut by riparian systems.

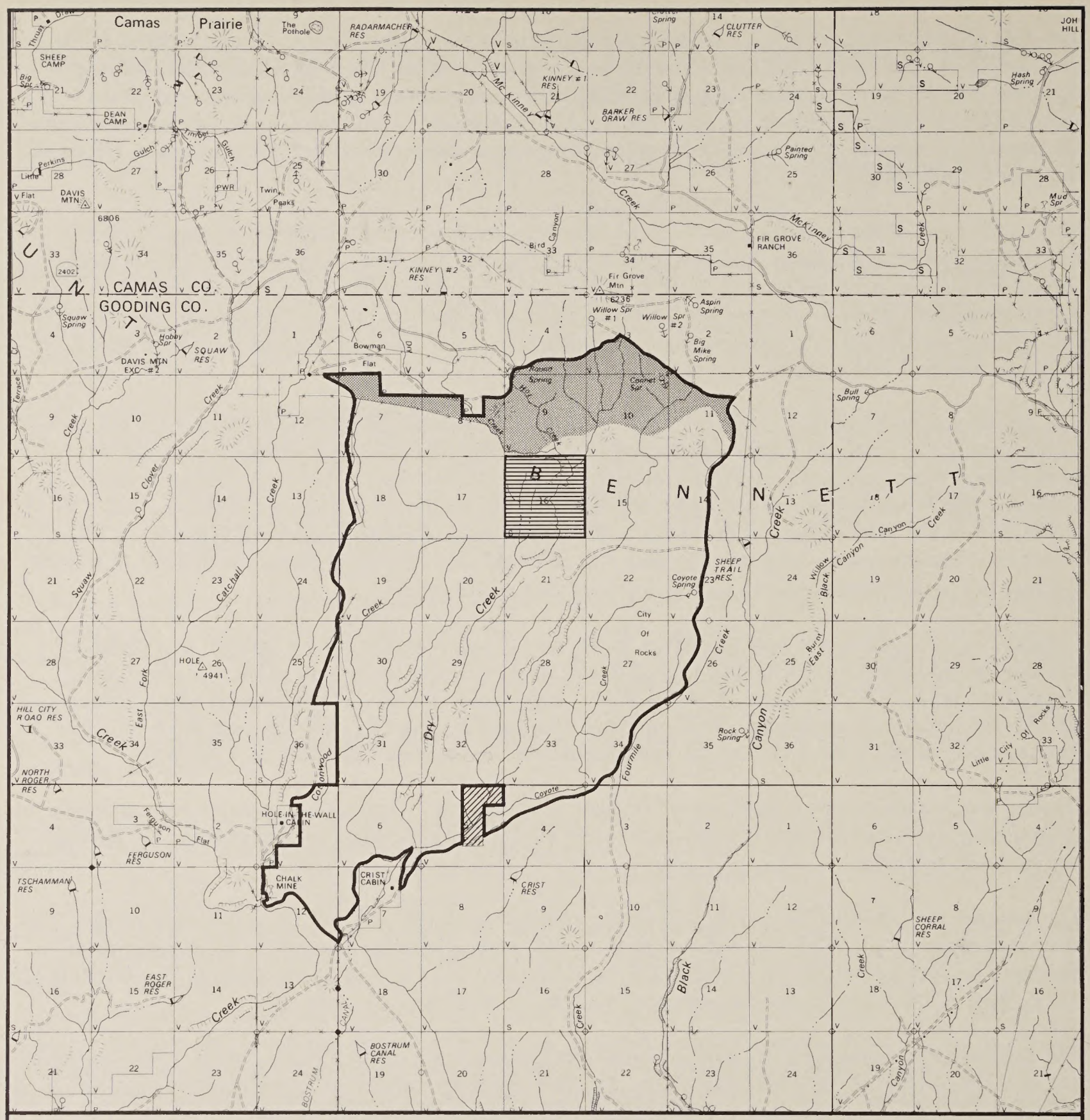
Conflicts with other resource uses and values in this part of the WSA are limited and the area could be managed as wilderness. The Gooding City of Rocks West WSA lies to the west of the Gooding City of Rocks East WSA. This 6,287 acre WSA has similar high quality wilderness values and is also recommended suitable for wilderness designation. It is separated from the Gooding City of Rocks East WSA by a road. The proximity of this WSA enhances the manageability of the Gooding City of Rocks East WSA.

Grazing use and management activities will be allowed to continue. Grazing management related vehicle use on boundary roads and two cherry-stem roads would have a negligible effect on opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation.

The area has low potential for metals, oil and gas, coal and moderate potential for geothermal energy. The southwest corner of the WSA has high potential for diatomite. However, extensive minable reserves of diatomite are located outside the Gooding City of Rocks East WSA as well as the adjacent Gooding City of Rocks West WSA, which is also recommended suitable for wilderness designation.

The 1,680 acres recommended for nonwilderness uses are sagebrush-covered plateau areas on the northern end of the Gooding City of Rocks East WSA. The two developed springs, an erosion-control dam, fences, an old brush-control project area and vehicle routes in this area diminish natural values.

The nonsuitable part of the WSA lacks the geologic and vegetative diversity exhibited in the area recommended suitable, so opportunities for solitude are more limited than in the City of Rocks formations and riparian drainages of the southern, suitable part of the WSA.



RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS

RECOMMENDED FOR NONWILDERNESS

LAND OUTSIDE WSA RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS

SPLIT ESTATE

STATE

PRIVATE

1 0 1 2 3

Scale in Miles

ID-54-8A
GOODING CITY OF ROCKS EAST PROPOSAL

MARCH 1988

Table 1 -- Land Status and Acreage Summary of the Study Area
GOODING CITY OF ROCKS EAST WSA

Within Wilderness Study Area

BLM (surface and subsurface)	14,743
Split Estate (BLM surface only)	0
Inholdings (state, private)	0
Total	14,743

Within the Recommended Wilderness Boundary

BLM (within WSA)	13,063
BLM (outside WSA)	0
Split Estate (within WSA)	0
Split Estate (outside WSA)	0
Total BLM Land Recommended for Wilderness	13,063
Inholdings (state, private)	0
State land (outside WSA)	885
Private Land (outside WSA)	147

Within the Area Not Recommended for Wilderness

BLM	1,680
Split Estate	0
Total BLM Land Not Recommended for Wilderness	1,680
Inholdings (state, private)	0

3. Criteria Considered in Developing the Wilderness Recommendations

Wilderness Characteristics

A. Naturalness

The Gooding City of Rocks East WSA generally appears natural. The WSA's deep canyons and benches in the portion recommended suitable for wilderness designations are virtually untouched by human works.

The portion of the WSA recommended nonsuitable for wilderness designation contains the following range developments: Round Spring, Connet Spring, Connet Erosion Control Dam, Connet Protective Fence, portions of the Strike Burn Fence and portions of historic brush treatment. The cumulative impact of these developments reduces naturalness in that portion of the WSA recommended nonsuitable for wilderness designation.

B. Solitude

The WSA's topography, boundary configuration and vegetative screening provide an outstanding opportunity for visitors to avoid others in the area. Numerous canyons and rock formations in the southern part of the WSA provide excellent topographic screening. Pillars and hoodoos of various heights and shapes allow visitors a high degree of seclusion and opportunity for solitude. Drainages encourage dispersion of visitor groups. The northern part of the WSA has rolling hills and buttes which also provide opportunity for solitude, though not as outstanding as the southern part.

In many canyon bottoms, trees in scattered riparian zones offer vegetative screening. Elsewhere, grasses and low shrubs combine with the topography to add to the sense of seclusion.

Human activities outside the WSA are visible near the boundary and from the high points in the WSA. Agricultural and community land patterns can be seen in the distance from ridges and buttes within the WSA. However, the sight of these fields and communities does not detract significantly from the solitude of the WSA due to the distances involved.

C. Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

The WSA offers exceptional scenery and a diversity of landforms. Natural features within the WSA provide outstanding opportunities for photography, hiking, camping, wildlife observation and nature study. Opportunities for horseback riding, fishing and hunting, as well as many other activities, are also present within the area. Excellent subjects for photography include the myriad of brilliantly colored lichen-encrusted rhyolite pillars, hoodoos and arches. The diverse vegetation ranges from sagebrush and grasses on the plateaus to ferns, mosses and wildflowers in shaded, rocky canyons. This diversity offers exceptional opportunities for nature study. Opportunities are abundant for viewing elk, deer, sage grouse, raptors and coyotes. Black bear, bobcat and mountain quail are occasionally seen.

Several factors contribute to the Gooding City of Rocks East WSA's outstanding opportunities for hiking. The diversity of terrain, the varying degrees of difficulty in maneuvering through the pillars and long rock-filled drainages and the scarcity of water during much of the year combine to provide the recreationist challenges. The plateaus provide a sense of wide open space and also contain archaeological sites of interest to hikers. Aggregations of rhyolite pillars in the southern portion of the WSA provide an intimate sense of seclusion along with countless rock climbing opportunities.

Primitive camping opportunities are enhanced by the rugged terrain, by the availability of many camping sites among the rock pillars in the southern part of the WSA and by open space in the plateaus. The summer heat and lack of drinking water add to the primitiveness of the recreation experience.

The portion of the WSA recommended nonsuitable for wilderness designation does not provide the above-mentioned opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation. The nonsuitable area does provide access to the high quality primitive recreation opportunities located to the south. For example, both the Connet Spring and Round Spring range developments are easily accessible to vehicles and are used by recreationists as trailheads.

D. Special Features

Spectacular landforms occur within the drainages of the WSA. These include columns, hoodoos, arches and monoliths. These landforms display weathering processes and structural anomalies that are picturesque and unusual.

Diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System

A. Assessing the Diversity of Natural Systems and Features as Represented by Ecosystems

Wilderness designation of the Gooding City of Rocks WSA would add an ecosystem presently represented in the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS) by three designated areas with 76,699 acres. There are 35 other BLM areas in the state under study with this ecosystem. This information is summarized in Table 2.

TABLE 2

Ecosystem Representation

Bailey-Kuchler Classification	NWPS Areas areas	NWPS Areas acres	Other BLM Studies areas	Other BLM Studies acres
Dry Domain/Intermountain Sagebrush Province				
		NATIONWIDE		
Sagebrush Steppe Ecosystem	3	76,699	136	4,359,340
		IDAHO		
Sagebrush Steppe Ecosystem	1	12,997	35	949,916
		NEVADA		
Sagebrush Steppe Ecosystem	1	32,407	29	1,273,919
		CALIFORNIA		
Sagebrush Steppe Ecosystem	0	0	5	152,431
		OREGON		
Sagebrush Steppe Ecosystem	0	0	67	1,983,074

B. Expanding the Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive Recreation Within a Day's Driving Time (Five Hours) of Major Population Centers

The Gooding City of Rocks East WSA is within a five-hour drive from Boise, Idaho. Table 3 summarizes the number and acreage of designated areas and other BLM study areas within a five-hour drive of the population center.

Table 3

Wilderness Opportunities for Residents of Major Population Centers

Population Centers	NWPS Areas		Other BLM Studies	
	areas	acres	areas	acres
Boise, Idaho	16	4,741,570	141	5,374,250

C. Balancing the Geographic Distribution of Wilderness Areas

The Gooding City of Rocks East WSA would not contribute to balancing the geographic distribution of areas within the NWPS. The NPS-administered Craters of the Moon Wilderness (43,243 acres) representing a similar ecosystem is a two-hour drive to the northeast. The Gooding City of Rocks East WSA, however, would add a vastly different landform to the NWPS than that contained within the Craters of the Moon Wilderness.

Manageability

The 13,063 acre portion of the Gooding City of Rocks East WSA recommended for wilderness designation can reasonably be managed as wilderness. Conflicts with other resource uses are minimal. Rugged topography restricts vehicle use in all but the northernmost parts of the WSA. The two cherry-stem roads into that part of the WSA recommended suitable would be closed to all vehicle use except that required for grazing management. Livestock permittees would use the roads approximately ten times annually to maintain developments and manage livestock with negligible effects on opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation.

Although diatomite deposits occur in the southwest part of the WSA and mining claims have been located on the deposits, development is not anticipated. The Chalk Mine block of diatomaceous earth in the WSA is covered by basalt, limiting its minability. In addition, a large deposit containing approximately 35 million tons lies outside the Gooding City of Rocks East and West WSA boundaries. This deposit is only partially capped by basalt and could be mined by open-pit methods.

The east, west and south boundaries of the area recommended suitable are well-defined by roads. There are no nonfederal inholdings in the WSA. Adjacent state and private lands proposed for acquisition are used solely for grazing and, based on the minerals resources analysis, no mineral development anticipated on these parcels.

The 1,680 acres of the WSA not recommended suitable for wilderness designation could also be managed as wilderness. However, in the less rugged topography in this part of the WSA, it would be more difficult to restrict off-road vehicle use.

Energy and Minerals Resource Values

The U.S. Geological Survey and Bureau of Mines prepared a mineral assessment for the Gooding City of Rocks East WSA in 1984 and 1985. The WSA has low potential for metals, oil and gas, coal, and moderate potential for geothermal energy.

Parts of the Clover Creek diatomite deposit occur in the southwest part of the Gooding City of Rocks East WSA and the southern tip and western half of the Gooding City of Rocks West WSA. Five exposures, or blocks, containing 416 million tons of diatomaceous material make up the Clover Creek deposit. The Chalk Mine block in the Gooding City of Rocks East WSA is predominantly covered by basalt, limiting its minability. The North Clover Creek block west of and outside the boundaries of both WSAs is only partly capped by basalt and could be mined by open-pit methods on the western flank of the exposure.

The minable wedge contains an inferred marginal reserve of 35 million tons of diatomite possibly suitable for filter, filler, insulation and other applications. The resource is classified as marginal because products from it may be inferior to currently marketed diatomite products. Placer claims cover approximately 440 acres of the diatomite deposits in the southwest part of the WSA.

Several occurrences of platy welded tuff, possibly suitable as decorative stone, are within the Gooding City of Rocks East WSA; however, abundant deposits to the east of the WSA could be more easily developed. Deposits of sand and gravel are too distant from markets and there is little chance of development.

No mineralized rock was identified in the WSA. There is no present production of any energy or mineral resources in the WSA. There are no mineral leases in the WSA.

Impacts on Resources

The following comparative impact table summarizes the effects on pertinent resources for all the alternatives considered including designation or nondesignation of the entire area as wilderness.

Table 4
Comparative Summary of the Impacts by Alternative
WSA ID-54-8A (GOODING CITY OF ROCKS EAST)

ISSUE TOPICS	PROPOSED ACTION (PARTIAL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE)	ALL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE)	NO WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE
Impacts on Wilderness Values	The 13,063 acres designated as wilderness would receive long-term Congressional protection. All wilderness values in this area would be maintained. The area's naturalness and opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation and solitude would improve slightly. The area's most spectacular scenery, naturalness and opportunities for primitive recreation and solitude would be retained. On the 1,680 acres not designated as wilderness, there would be a slight reduction of naturalness and opportunities for solitude.	All wilderness values would receive long-term Congressional protection. There would be a slight improvement in the area's naturalness and opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation and solitude on 13,063 acres. On 1,680 acres, there would be a slight decrease in naturalness and opportunities for solitude.	There would be a slight reduction in naturalness on 13,063 acres. On 1,680 acres, there would be a moderate reduction of the area's naturalness and opportunities for solitude.
Impacts on Recreational ORV Use	Recreational ORV use of 140 visitor days would be foregone on 13,063 acres annually. Impacts of shifting this use to other public lands would be negligible. On the 1,680 acres of the WSA not designated as wilderness, recreational ORV use would continue to increase but would not exceed 100 visitor days annually.	Recreational ORV use of 150 visitor days would be forgone annually. The impacts of shifting this use to other public lands would be negligible.	There would be no impact on recreational ORV use.
Impacts on Development of Mineral Resources	Development of potential mineral resources would be foregone on 13,043 acres. This includes an estimated 6 million tons of diatomite (1.5% of the total reserve within 5 miles of the WSA) and moderate potential for geothermal resources. Potential mineral resources on 1,680 acres would be available for development.	Development of potential mineral resources would be foregone. This includes an estimated 6 million tons of diatomite (1.5% of the total reserve within 5 miles of the WSA) and moderate potential for geothermal resources.	Potential mineral resources would be available for development. This includes moderate potential for geothermal resources and an estimated 6 million tons of diatomite (1.5% of the total reserve within 5 miles of the WSA). There would be no impact on development of mineral resources.
Impacts on Grazing Facility Maintenance and Construction	There would be no impact on grazing facility maintenance and construction.	There would be no impact on grazing facilIty maintenance and construction.	There would be no impact on grazing facility maintenance and construction.

Local Social and Economic Considerations

Social and economic factors were not considered a significant issue in the study.

Summary of WSA-Specific Public Comments

Public involvement has occurred throughout the wilderness review process. During public review of the Draft EIS, 47 comments supporting wilderness designation of the Gooding City of Rocks East WSA were received including 11 specifically supporting the alternative boundary. Thirteen of these contained no supporting reason for their position. Comments with supporting reasons addressed the area's wilderness values and quality, the lack of resource conflicts, manageability and specific wilderness resources including recreation, wildlife and cultural resources and the area's preservation value. Ten comments addressed the area contributing to expanding diversity in the NWPS. Of particular interest was the opportunity to designate a significant wilderness complex in the Mount Bennett Hills.

Ten comments were received opposing wilderness designation of the area. Two of these contained no supporting reasons for their position. Comments with supporting reasons stated the area is better suited for other uses, it did not need or deserve wilderness protection, designation is a waste of money, the area looks like the rest of Idaho, it is too large or not large enough, has minimal wilderness quality or has ORV conflicts.

The Board of Camas County Commissioners opposed any more wilderness in Idaho. The Idaho Department of Health and Welfare, Department of Water Quality, Office of the Attorney General, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service, Bureau of Reclamation and the Environmental Protection Agency comments did not specifically address the Gooding City of Rocks East WSA.

Gooding City of Rocks West Wilderness Study Area

1. The Study Area -- 6,287 acres

The Gooding City of Rocks West WSA (ID-54-8B) is located in Gooding County, Idaho. The WSA includes 6,287 acres of BLM-administered lands. There are no split estate lands or inholdings within the area (see Table 1). The WSA's boundary is primarily formed by the following roads: on the west and south by BLM Road 2410, the Clover Creek Road; on the north and east by unnamed, nonsystem jeep trails. Portions of the western boundary follow the East Fork of Clover Creek. Portions of the eastern and southern boundary follow state and private land. The WSA is one of five WSAs within the Mount Bennett Hills, a rolling belt of foothills between the Sawtooth Mountains to the north and the Snake River Plain to the south.

The WSA is a gently sloping prairie on the south face of the Bennett Hills cut by the East Fork of Clover Creek, Catchall Creek and other unnamed drainages. These canyon drainages contain rhyolite columns which rise more than 100 feet. Basalt bluffs, arches, pillars and hoodoos dominate this area. These formations are a continuation of the area known locally as the "City of Rocks." Although the rock types are not the same, the rock formations in the City of Rocks rival those found in Utah's Arches National Park. Elevations in the area range from 4,080 to 5,616 feet.

The dominant vegetation is sagebrush and grasses. Shaded canyons support pockets of willows, aspen, cottonwood, serviceberry and chokecherry. Wildlife species include elk, deer, coyotes, bear, birds of prey and upland game birds.

The WSA was studied under Section 603 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) and included in the Shoshone/Sun Valley Final Environmental Impact Statement, Wilderness, filed in April 1986. Two alternatives were analyzed in the EIS: an all wilderness alternative, which is the recommendation of this report; and a no wilderness alternative.

2. Recommendation and Rationale

6,287 acres recommended for wilderness

0 acres recommended for nonwilderness

The recommendation for the Gooding City of Rocks West WSA is to designate 6,287 acres as wilderness. This recommendation is the environmentally preferred alternative. It will cause the least change from the natural environment in the long term.

The all wilderness alternative will also apply to any adjacent nonfederal lands acquired through purchase or exchange with willing owners. Approximately 395 acres west of the road dissecting the state land section on the WSA's east boundary have been identified for acquisition. All 6,287 acres of federal land within the WSA are shown as the Gooding City of Rocks West WSA on the Gooding City of Rocks West Proposal map.

The wilderness values of the WSA are exceptional. The area exhibits special ecological, geological and cultural features, all of scientific and educational value. All these values would benefit from wilderness designation. The WSA's deep canyons and benches are virtually untouched by human works. The Gooding City of Rocks West WSA would add landforms currently not represented in the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS) in Idaho. The WSA does not contain resource values or uses that would significantly conflict with wilderness management or negatively impact the area's wilderness characteristics. Wilderness designation will add a high quality, diverse area to the wilderness system.

Cultural resources in the WSA include rock art petroglyphs and surface lithic scatters. Vitrophyre, an important raw material for flaked stone tools, is found near some cultural sites.

The WSA is virtually pristine. Minor imprints on the area's apparent naturalness include the Strike Burn Fire Seeding (2,000 acres within the WSA, aerial seeding completed in 1959, most of which was unsuccessful and can no longer be located on the ground), short drift fences, mining claim markers and faint vehicle trails. The fire seeding and vehicle trails are revegetating and returning to a more natural-appearing condition. These minor imprints are diminished further by the screening effects of the area's topography.

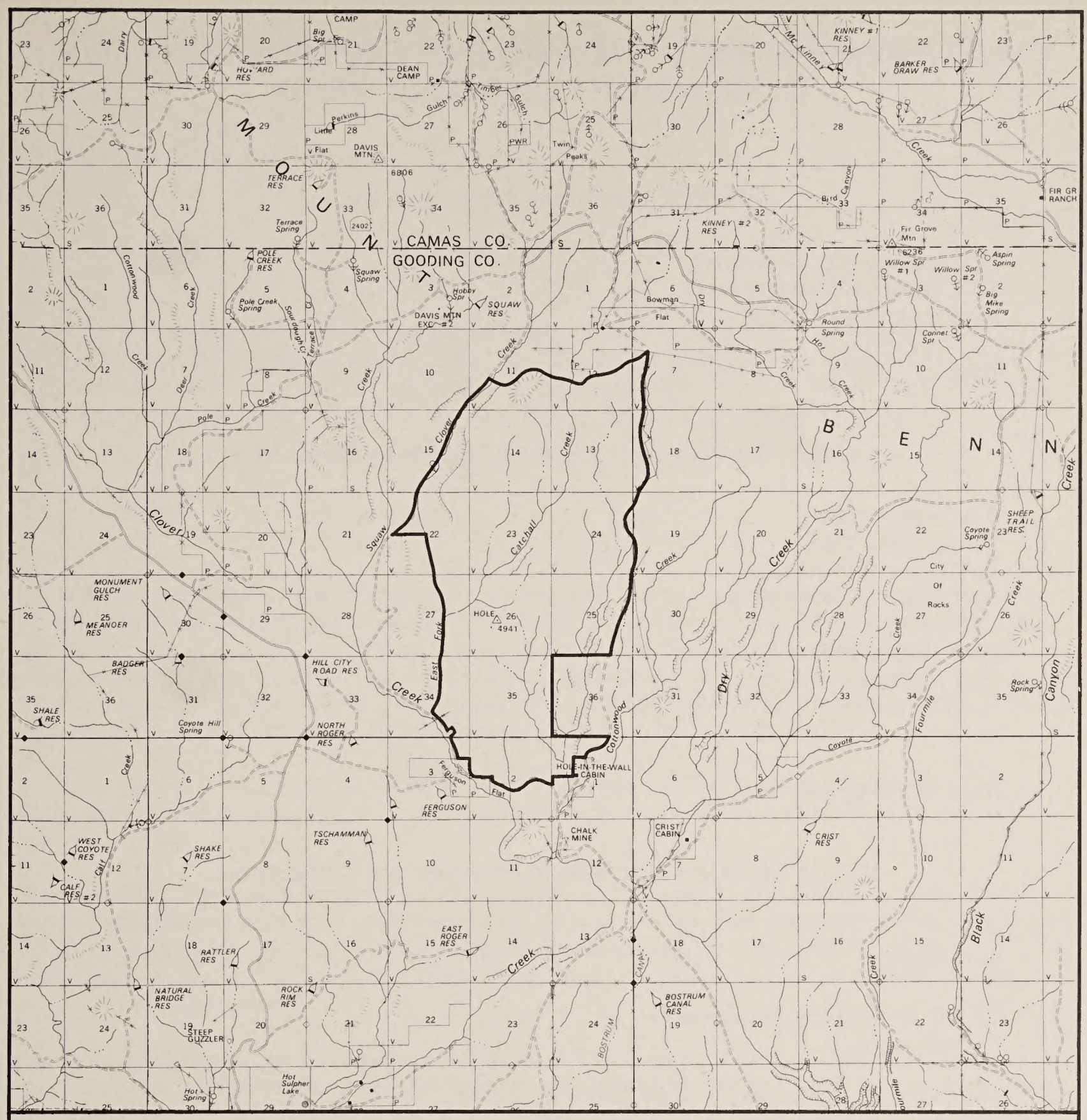
The Gooding City of Rocks West WSA offers outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation. The area's "City of Rocks" formations, proximity to the Gooding City of Rocks East WSA and the steep gorges and dense riparian vegetation within most of the canyons provide endless opportunities for visitors to disperse and avoid others. The recreational values of this area are exceptional. Primitive recreation opportunities include hiking, camping, horseback riding, climbing, hunting, nature study and photography.

The Intermountain Sagebrush Province/Sagebrush Steppe Ecosystem is the ecosystem represented in this WSA. In Idaho, this Bailey-Kuchler classification ecosystem is represented in the Craters of the Moon Wilderness administered by the National Park Service (NPS). However, the landforms in the Craters of the Moon Wilderness are vastly different from the landforms represented in the Gooding City of Rocks West WSA. The Craters of the Moon Wilderness is an outstanding example of Snake River Plain desert lava flow ecosystems while the Gooding City of Rocks area consists of thousands of acres of welded volcanic tuff rock formations and basalt plateaus cut by riparian systems.

Conflicts with other resource uses and values in the WSA are limited and the area could be managed as wilderness. The Gooding City of Rocks East WSA, to the east of the Gooding City of Rocks West WSA, has similar high-quality wilderness values. Most of the Gooding City of Rocks East WSA (13,063 acres) is also recommended suitable for wilderness designation. It is separated from the Gooding City of Rocks West WSA by a rough road. The proximity of these WSAs enhances the manageability of both WSAs.

Grazing use and management activities will be allowed to continue. Grazing management related vehicle use on boundary roads and one cherry-stem road would have a negligible affect on wilderness values.

The area has low potential for metals, oil, gas, coal and moderate potential for geothermal energy. The western corner of the WSA has high potential for diatomite. However, extensive minable reserves of diatomite are located outside the Gooding City of Rocks West WSA as well as the adjacent Gooding City of Rocks East WSA which is also recommended suitable for wilderness designation.



RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS

RECOMMENDED FOR NONWILDERNESS

LAND OUTSIDE WSA RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS

SPLIT ESTATE

STATE

PRIVATE

1 0 1 2 3

Scale in Miles

ID-54-8B

GOODING CITY OF ROCKS WEST PROPOSAL

MARCH 1988

Table 1 -- Land Status and Acreage Summary of the Study Area
GOODING CITY OF ROCKS WEST

Within Wilderness Study Area

BLM (surface and subsurface)	6,287
Split Estate (BLM surface only)	0
Inholdings (state, private)	0
Total	6,287

Within the Recommended Wilderness Boundary

BLM (within WSA)	6,287
BLM (outside WSA)	0
Split Estate (within WSA)	0
Split Estate (outside WSA)	0
Total BLM Land Recommended for Wilderness	6,287
Inholdings (state, private)	0
State land (outside WSA)	395

Within the Area Not Recommended for Wilderness

BLM	0
Split Estate	0
Total BLM Land Not Recommended for Wilderness	0
Inholdings (state, private)	0

3. Criteria Considered in Developing the Wilderness Recommendations

Wilderness Characteristics

A. Naturalness

Generally, the Gooding City of Rocks West WSA appears natural. The WSA's deep canyons and benches are virtually untouched by human impacts. Minor imprints on the area's apparent naturalness include the Strike Burn Fire Seeding (an aerial seeding on about 2,000 acres within the WSA completed in 1959), short drift fences totaling less than two miles, a few mining claim markers and faint vehicle trails.

B. Solitude

The WSA's topography, boundary configuration and vegetative screening provide outstanding opportunities for visitors to avoid the sights and sounds of others in the WSA. Canyons and rhyolite rock formations in the southern part of the WSA provide excellent topographic screening. Pillars and hoodoos of various heights and shapes allow visitors a high degree of seclusion and solitude. Drainages encourage dispersion of visitor groups. The northern part of the WSA has rolling hills and buttes which also provide solitude though opportunities are not as outstanding as in the southern part.

In many canyon bottoms, scattered riparian zones offer vegetative screening. Elsewhere, grasses and low shrubs provide little screening; however, combined with the area's topography, they add to the sense of seclusion.

The recreationist's solitude is generally not encroached upon by livestock operations in the steep, boulder-strewn, twisting drainages in the southern part of the WSA since these areas are usually dry by early summer and are not favored by operators. Livestock frequents the flatter northern and northeastern parts of the WSA, especially near the springs. The animals and operators are present only periodically during the year and in relatively few numbers.

Human activities outside the WSA are visible near the WSA's boundary and from high points within the area. A patchwork of fields, farms and the community of Gooding can be seen in the distance from ridges and buttes within the WSA. However, these outside sights and sounds do not significantly affect the WSA because of the distances involved.

C. Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

The WSA offers exceptional scenery and a diversity of landforms. Natural features within the WSA provide outstanding opportunities for photography, hiking, camping, wildlife observation and nature study. Opportunities for horseback riding, fishing and hunting, as well as many other activities are also present within the area. Subjects for photography include the myriad of brilliantly colored lichen-encrusted rhyolite pillars, hoodoos and arches. The diverse vegetation ranges from sagebrush and grasses on the plateaus to

ferns, mosses and wild flowers in shaded, rocky canyons. This diversity offers exceptional opportunities for nature study.

Opportunities are abundant for viewing such species as elk, deer, sage grouse, raptors and coyotes. Black bear, bobcat and mountain quail are occasionally seen.

Several factors contribute to the Gooding City of Rocks West WSA's outstanding opportunities for hiking. The diversity of terrain, the varying degrees of difficulty in maneuvering through the pillars and long, rock-filled drainages, plus the scarcity of water during much of the year combine to provide the recreationist a challenge. The northern part of the WSA provides a sense of wide open space and also contains interesting cultural sites. Aggregations of rhyolite pillars in the southern part of the WSA provide a sense of seclusion along with countless rock climbing opportunities.

Primitive camping opportunities are enhanced by the rugged terrain of the WSA, the many camping spots among the rock pillars in the southern part of the WSA and by open space in the northern part of the WSA. The extreme summer heat and lack of drinking and cooking water add to the primitiveness of the recreation experience.

D. Special Features

Cultural sites with associated petroglyphs are located in the WSA. Vitrophyre, an important raw material for flaked stone tools, is found near some cultural sites.

Spectacular landforms occur within the drainages of the WSA. These include columns, hoodoos, arches and monoliths. These landforms display weathering processes and structural anomalies that are picturesque and unusual.

Diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System

A. Assessing the Diversity of Natural Systems and Features as Represented by Ecosystems

Wilderness designation of the Gooding City of Rocks West WSA would add an ecosystem presently represented in the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS) by three designated areas with 76,699 acres. There are 35 other BLM areas in the state under study with this ecosystem. This information is summarized in Table 2.

TABLE 2

Ecosystem Representation

Bailey-Kuchler Classification	NWPS Areas areas	NWPS Areas acres	Other BLM Studies areas	Other BLM Studies acres
Dry Domain/Intermountain Sagebrush Province				
		NATIONWIDE		
Sagebrush Steppe Ecosystem	3	76,699	136	4,359,340
		IDAHO		
Sagebrush Steppe Ecosystem	1	12,997	35	949,916
		NEVADA		
Sagebrush Steppe Ecosystem	1	32,407	29	1,273,919
		CALIFORNIA		
Sagebrush Steppe Ecosystem	0	0	5	152,431
		OREGON		
Sagebrush Steppe Ecosystem	0	0	67	1,983,074

B. Expanding the Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive Recreation Within a Day's Driving Time (Five Hours) of Major Population Centers

The Gooding City of Rocks West WSA is within a five-hour drive from Boise, Idaho. Table 3 summarizes the number and acreage of designated areas and other BLM study areas within a five-hour drive of the population center.

Table 3

Wilderness Opportunities for Residents of Major Population Centers

Population Centers	NWPS Areas		Other BLM Studies	
	areas	acres	areas	acres
Boise, Idaho	16	4,741,570	141	5,374,250

C. Balancing the Geographic Distribution of Wilderness Areas

The Gooding City of Rocks West WSA would not contribute to balancing the geographic distribution of areas within the NWPS. The NPS-administered Craters of the Moon Wilderness (43,243 acres) representing a similar ecosystem is a two-hour drive to the northeast. The Gooding City of Rocks West WSA, however, would add a landform to the NWPS that is very different from that represented in the Craters of the Moon Wilderness.

Manageability

The 6,287 acre Gooding City of Rocks West WSA can reasonably be managed as wilderness. Conflicts with other resource uses are minimal. Rugged topography restricts vehicle use in all but the northernmost parts of the WSA. The cherry-stem road into that part of the WSA would be closed to all vehicle use except that required for grazing management. Livestock permittees would use the road approximately ten times annually to manage livestock with negligible effects on opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation.

Although diatomite deposits occur in the west and southwest parts of the Gooding City of Rocks West WSA and mining claims have been located on the deposits, development in the WSA is not anticipated. The three blocks of diatomaceous material wholly or partially within the WSA are predominantly covered by basalt, limiting minability. In addition, the North Clover block, a large deposit containing approximately 35 million tons, lies outside the Gooding City of Rocks West and East WSA boundaries. This deposit is only partially capped by basalt and could be mined by open-pit methods.

The majority of the WSA boundaries are well-defined by roads and the east fork of Catchall Creek. There are no nonfederal inholdings in the WSA. Adjacent state lands proposed for acquisition are used solely for grazing and, based on the mineral resources analysis, no mineral development is anticipated on these parcels.

Energy and Minerals Resource Values

The U.S. Geologic Survey and Bureau of Mines prepared a mineral assessment for the Gooding City of Rocks West WSA in 1984 and 1985. The WSA has low potential for metals, oil, gas, coal and moderate potential for geothermal energy.

The western and southern parts of the WSA have high potential for diatomite. The Clover Creek diatomite deposit overlaps and the western and southern parts of the Gooding City of Rocks West WSA. Five exposures, or blocks, containing 416 million tons of diatomaceous material make up the Clover Creek deposit. Four of the blocks are wholly or partially within the WSA; the Catchall, Ferguson, South Clover and Chalk Mine blocks. The four blocks are predominantly covered by basalt. The North Clover block, just west of the Gooding City of Rocks West WSA, is only partly capped by basalt and could be mined by open-pit methods on the western flank of the exposure. The minable wedge, outside the WSA, contains an inferred marginal reserve of 35 million tons of diatomite potentially suitable for filter and filler insulation and other applications. The reserve is classified as marginal because products from it may be inferior to currently marketed diatomite products.

Several occurrences of platy welded tuff, possibly suitable as decorative stone, occur within the WSA; however, abundant and accessible deposits to the east of the Gooding City of Rocks West and East WSAs could be more easily developed. Deposits of sand and gravel are too distant from markets and there is little chance for development. No mineralized rock was identified in the WSA.

Placer claims for diatomaceous earth are held by two groups of claimants and cover approximately 2,260 acres in the western one-third of the Gooding City of Rocks West WSA. There are no mineral leases in the WSA. There is no present production of any energy or mineral resources in the WSA.

Impacts on Resources

The following comparative impact table summarizes the effects on pertinent resources for all the alternatives considered including designation or nondesignation of the entire area as wilderness.

Table 4
Comparative Summary of the Impacts by Alternative
WSA ID-54-8B (GOODING CITY OF ROCKS WEST)

ISSUE TOPICS	PROPOSED ACTION (ALL WILDERNESS/NO ACTION)	NO WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE
Impacts on Wilderness Values	All wilderness values would receive long-term Congressional protection. All wilderness values would be maintained. The area's naturalness and opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation would improve.	There would be a reduction of the area's naturalness and opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation.
Impacts on Recreational ORV Use	Recreational ORV use of 50 visitor days would be foregone annually. The impacts resulting from this use shifting to other public lands would be negligible.	There would be no impact on recreational ORV use.
Impacts on Development of Mineral Resources	Development of potential mineral resources would be foregone. This includes an estimated 34 million tons of diatomite (8.5% of the total reserve within 5 miles of the WSA) and moderate potential for geothermal resources.	Potential mineral resources would be available for development. This includes an estimated 34 million tons of diatomite (8.5% of the total reserve within 5 miles of the WSA) and moderate potential for geothermal resources.
Impacts on Grazing Facility Maintenance and Construction	There would be no impact on grazing facility maintenance and construction.	There would be no impact on grazing facility maintenance and construction.

Local Social and Economic Considerations

Social and economic factors were not considered a significant issue on the study.

Summary of WSA-Specific Public Comments

Public involvement has occurred throughout the wilderness review process. During public review of the Draft EIS, 47 comments supporting wilderness designation of the Gooding City of Rocks West WSA were received. Thirteen of these contained no supporting reasons for their position. Comments with supporting reasons addressed the area's wilderness values and quality, the lack of resource conflicts, manageability of specified wilderness resources including recreation, wildlife and cultural resources and the area's preservation value. Ten comments addressed the area's contribution to expanding diversity in the NWPS. Of particular interest was the opportunity to designate a significant wilderness complex in the Mount Bennett Hills.

Ten comments were received opposing wilderness designation of the area. Two of these contained no supporting reasons for their position. Comments with supporting reasons stated the area is better suited for other uses, it did not need or deserve wilderness protection, designation is a waste of money, the area looks like the rest of Idaho, it is too large or not large enough, has minimal wilderness quality or has ORV conflicts.

The Board of Camas County Commissioners opposed any more wilderness in Idaho. The Idaho Department of Health and Welfare, Department of Water Quality and Office of the Attorney General, the U.S. Department of Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service, Bureau of Reclamation and the Environmental Protection Agency letters contained no WSA specific comments.

Deer Creek Wilderness Study Area

1. The Study Area -- 7,487 acres

The Deer Creek WSA (ID-54-10) is located in Gooding and Camas Counties, Idaho. The WSA includes 7,487 acres of BLM-administered lands. There are no split estate lands within the area. There is a 640 acre inholding of state land within the WSA (see Table 1).

The WSA's boundaries are primarily formed by the following roads: on the west by County Road 2002, the Bliss-Hill City Road; on the west, north and east by BLM Road 2402, the Davis Mountain Road; and also on the east by an unnamed road. Portions of the eastern boundary follow Terrace Creek. The southern boundary follows private land.

The WSA is one of five WSAs within the Mount Bennett Hills, a rolling belt of foothills between the Sawtooth Mountains to the north and the Snake River Plains to the south. The WSA is southwest of Davis Mountain, one of the highest points in the Bennett Hills.

The WSA is dominated by a series of steep hills with Cottonwood Creek, Deer Creek and unnamed drainages cutting between them. Rhyolite and basalt outcrops dominate the tops of many of the hills. Elevations range from 4,920 to 6,560 feet.

The WSA's dominant vegetation is sagebrush and grasses. The higher elevations have scattered stands of aspen, tobacco brush, Indian paintbrush and lupine.

Several species of wildlife including elk, deer, bear, coyotes, birds of prey and upland game birds are found in the WSA.

The WSA was studied under Section 603 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) and included in the Shoshone/Sun Valley Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), Wilderness, filed in April 1986. Two alternatives were analyzed in the EIS: a no wilderness alternative, which is the recommendation of this report; and an all wilderness alternative.

2. Recommendation and Rationale

0 acres recommended for wilderness

7,487 acres recommended for nonwilderness

The recommendation for the Deer Creek WSA is to release all 7,487 acres for nonwilderness uses. The environmentally preferable alternative is the all wilderness alternative. It would cause the least change from the natural environment over the long term. The recommendation would use all practical means to avoid or minimize adverse environmental impacts. All 7,487 acres of federal land within the WSA are recommended nonsuitable for wilderness designation and are shown as the Deer Creek WSA on the Deer Creek Proposal map.

The quality of wilderness values was the key consideration in the recommendation. While the WSA contained the wilderness values necessary for study, they are not considered to merit inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS). There are no significant wildlife species or habitats, scientific or educational values in the area that would benefit from wilderness designation. There are outstanding geologic features in the area. However, similar geologic based wilderness values of higher quality are recommended for wilderness designation within the nearby Gooding City of Rocks East and West WSAs.

The Deer Creek WSA is one of five WSAs in the Bennett Hills located on the northern edge of the Snake River Plain. Rock bluffs occur throughout the WSA, especially along the major drainages. In some drainages, rock formations composed of welded volcanic tuffs are present. These formations look like arches and pillars called "hoodoos." Most of the Deer Creek WSA is similar to the northern parts of the Gooding City of Rocks East and West WSAs; high plateaus cut by steep, narrow stream channels.

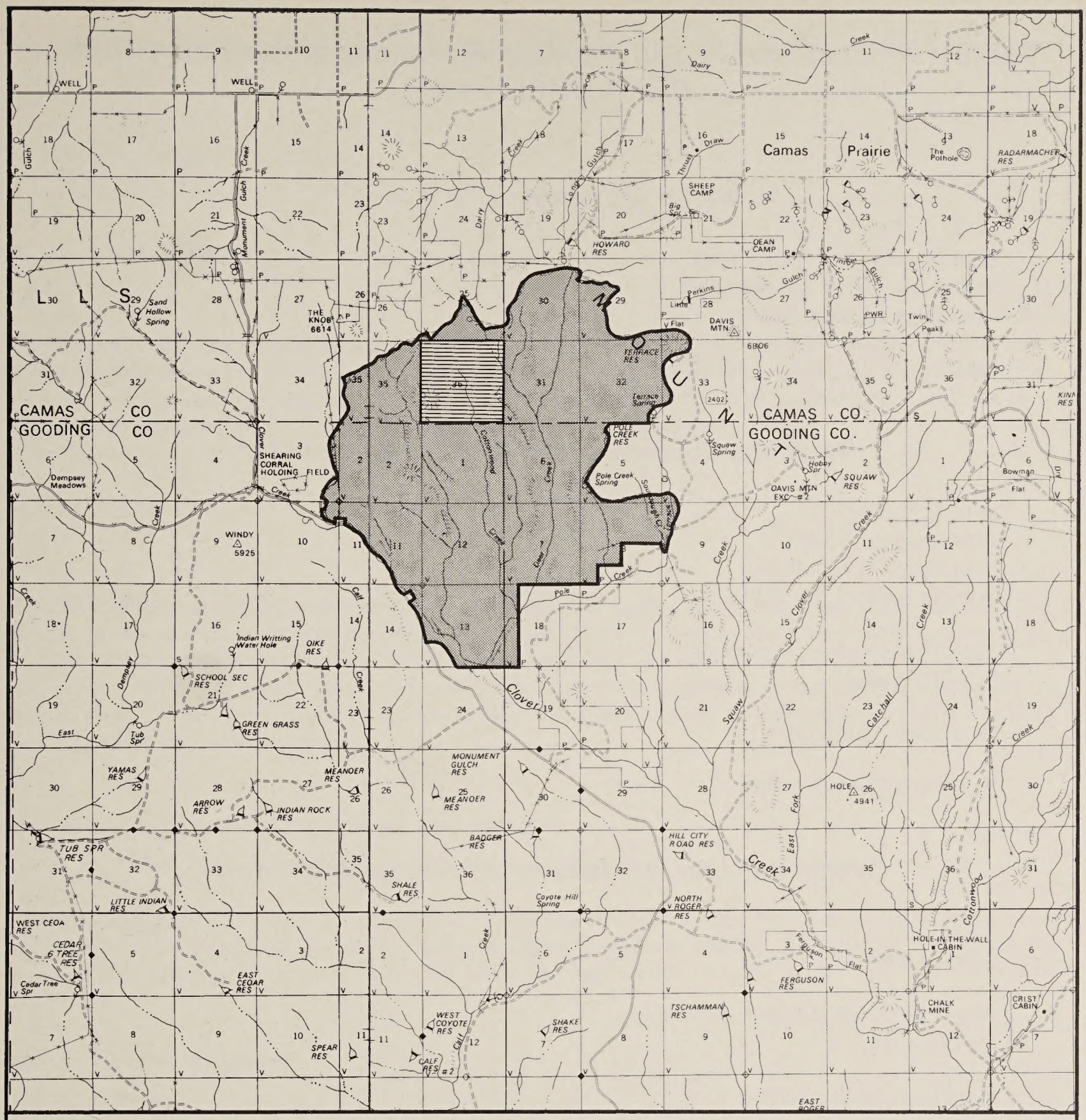
The area generally appears natural. Existing human imprints in the WSA are low-impact range developments. They are scattered throughout the area and have a negligible impact on the WSA's overall natural values. The Deer Creek WSA also offers opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation.

Extensive areas exhibiting the same types of wilderness values as those found in the Deer Creek WSA are also found in the Gooding City of Rocks East and West WSAs. However, the wilderness values of the Gooding City of Rocks East and West are of a much higher quality.

The Deer Creek WSA, like the other Bennett Hills WSAs (Black Canyon, Little City of Rocks and Gooding City of Rocks East and West), is an example of the Intermountain Sagebrush Province/Sagebrush Steppe Ecosystem. In Idaho, this Bailey-Kuchler classification ecosystem is represented in the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS) in the Craters of the Moon Wilderness administered by the National Park Service (NPS).

Designation of any of the Bennett Hills WSAs would add diversity in landforms to the NWPS. Through the wilderness study process, it was determined that the designation of 19,310 acres in the Gooding City of Rocks East and West WSAs represents a more significant opportunity to preserve the types of wilderness values found in the Bennett Hills (landforms, natural values, opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation and special features) than would designation of the Deer Creek WSA.

At the present time, there is little threat to the existing naturalness of the area. There are no known or projected activities, little known mineral potential and no valid rights of others in the WSA. Therefore, even without wilderness designation, the quality and level of values now found in the WSA are not expected to significantly change.



RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS

RECOMMENDED FOR NONWILDERNESS

LAND OUTSIDE WSA RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS

SPLIT ESTATE

STATE

PRIVATE

1 0 1 2 3

Scale in Miles

ID-54-10
DEER CREEK
PROPOSAL

MARCH 1988

Table 1 -- Land Status and Acreage Summary of the Study Area
DEER CREEK WSA

Within Wilderness Study Area

BLM (surface and subsurface)	7,487
Split Estate (BLM surface only)	0
Inholdings (state, private)	640
Total	8,127

Within the Recommended Wilderness Boundary

BLM (within WSA)	0
BLM (outside WSA)	0
Split Estate (within WSA)	0
Split Estate (outside WSA)	0
Total BLM Land Recommended for Wilderness	0
Inholdings (state, private)	0
State land (outside WSA)	0

Within the Area Not Recommended for Wilderness

BLM	7,487
Split Estate	0
Total BLM Land Not Recommended for Wilderness	7,487
Inholdings (state, private)	640

3. Criteria Considered in Developing the Wilderness Recommendations

Wilderness Characteristics

A. Naturalness

The Deer Creek WSA appears natural. Short sections of drift fences, a spring development and two short vehicle trails, totaling one-half mile, are the only human imprints in the WSA. The drift fences and spring development are localized imprints and have no significant effect on the WSA's naturalness. The vehicle trails would eventually return to a natural condition if use was eliminated.

B. Solitude

The WSA offers outstanding opportunities for solitude. The quality of solitude in the WSA would depend largely on the number of users in the WSA at one time. If use increased from present levels, it would be hard to avoid the sights and sounds of other visitors. Although the canyons within the WSA provide topographic screening, a large number of visitors could exceed the capability of these canyons to screen visitors from one another. Aspen groves in the WSA's northern portion provide screening but most of the WSA has little vegetative screening.

C. Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

The outstanding primitive and unconfined recreational opportunities in this WSA are based on the diversity of activities available including hiking, nature study, photography and hunting. The variety of environments provides visual interest for both the hiker and those involved in nature study.

D. Special Features

The WSA has no significant special features.

Diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System

A. Assessing the Diversity of Natural Systems and Features as Represented by Ecosystems

Wilderness designation of the Deer Creek WSA would add an ecosystem presently represented in the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS) by three designated areas with 76,699 acres. There are 35 other BLM areas in the state under study with this ecosystem. This information is summarized in Table 2.

TABLE 2

Ecosystem Representation

Bailey-Kuchler Classification	NWPS Areas areas	NWPS Areas acres	Other BLM Studies areas	Other BLM Studies acres
Dry Domain/Intermountain Sagebrush Province				
		NATIONWIDE		
Sagebrush Steppe Ecosystem	3	76,699	136	4,359,340
		IDAHO		
Sagebrush Steppe Ecosystem	1	12,997	35	949,916
		NEVADA		
Sagebrush Steppe Ecosystem	1	32,407	29	1,273,919
		CALIFORNIA		
Sagebrush Steppe Ecosystem	0	0	5	152,431
		OREGON		
Sagebrush Steppe Ecosystem	0	0	67	1,983,074

B. Expanding the Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive Recreation within a Day's Driving Time (Five Hours) of Major Population Centers

The Deer Creek WSA is within a five-hour drive from Boise, Idaho. Table 3 summarizes the number and acreage of designated areas and other BLM study areas within a five-hour drive of the population center.

Table 3

Wilderness Opportunities for Residents of Major Population Centers

Population Centers	NWPS Areas		Other BLM Studies	
	areas	acres	areas	acres
Boise, Idaho	16	4,741,570	141	5,374,250

C. Balancing the Geographic Distribution of Wilderness Areas

The Deer Creek WSA would not contribute to balancing the geographic distribution of areas within the NWPS.

Manageability

The Deer Creek WSA is manageable as wilderness. Conflicts with other resources and uses are minimal. Livestock permittees would require access into the area occasionally to maintain rangeland developments, primarily fences. Continuation of grazing management activities in the same manner and degree would have little effect on wilderness values or wilderness management. The state land inholding is used solely for grazing. Based on the mineral resource analysis, no mineral development on this parcel is anticipated.

Energy and Minerals Resource Values

Except for the state land inholding, all surface and mineral estates in the WSA are in federal ownership and are open to mineral entry. The Deer Creek WSA has low potential for oil and gas, coal, and moderate potential for geothermal energy. This classification is based on geology and U.S. Geological Survey studies on the WSAs to the southeast.

The WSA is classified as having low potential for other leasable minerals based on an unfavorable geologic environment (Fernette 1983). There are no mineral leases within the WSA. The entire area is classified as having low potential for metallic mineral resources based on an unfavorable geologic environment. It is classified as having moderate potential for diatomite deposits based on the presence of the Banbury sediments underlying the WSA (Fernette 1983). There are no mining claims in the WSA. Based on field observations, the area is classified as having low potential for saleable materials.

Impacts on Resources

The following comparative impact table summarizes the effects on pertinent resources for all the alternatives considered including designation or nondesignation of the entire area as wilderness.

Table 4
Comparative Summary of the Impacts by Alternative
WSA ID-54-10 (DEER CREEK)

ISSUE TOPICS	PROPOSED ACTION (NO WILDERNESS/NO ACTION)	ALL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE
Impacts on Wilderness Values	The area's naturalness and opportunities for solitude would be reduced slightly.	All wilderness values would receive long-term Congressional protection. Naturalness and opportunities for solitude would improve slightly because of the elimination of ORV use and the acquisition of the state land inholding. Naturalness and opportunities for solitude would be reduced slightly by range management actions.
Impacts on Recreational ORV Use	There would be no impact on recreational ORV use.	Recreational ORV use of 100 visitor days would be forgone annually. The impact of shifting this use to other public lands would be negligible.
Impacts on Development Mineral Resources	Potential mineral resources would be available for development. This includes moderate potential for geothermal resources and diatomite. There would be no impact on development of mineral resources.	Development of potential mineral resources would be forgone. This includes moderate potential for geothermal resources and diatomite.
Impacts on Grazing Facility Maintenance and Construction	There would be no impact on grazing facility maintenance and construction.	There would be no impact on grazing facility maintenance and construction.

Local Social and Economic Considerations

Social and economic factors were not considered a significant issue in the study.

Summary of WSA-Specific Public Comments

Public involvement has occurred throughout the wilderness review process. During public review of the Draft EIS, 32 comments supporting wilderness designation of the Deer Creek WSA were received. Eight of these contained no supporting reasons for their position. Comments with supporting reasons addressed the area's wilderness values and resources including solitude, wildlife, recreation opportunities, scenery and the area's preservation value. Nine comments addressed the opportunity to designate a wilderness complex in the Mount Bennett Hills.

Six comments were received opposing wilderness designation of the area. Four of those contained no supporting reasons for their position. Comments with supporting reasons stated the area looks like the rest of Idaho and it is better suited for other uses.

The Board of Camas County Commissioners opposed any more wilderness in Idaho. The Idaho Department of Health and Welfare, Department of Water Quality, Office of the Attorney General, the U.S. Department of Fish and Wildlife, National Park Service, Bureau of Reclamation and the Environmental Protection Agency commented on the Draft EIS. None of their comments specifically addressed the Deer Creek WSA.

Lava Wilderness Study Area

1. The Study Area -- 23,680 acres

The Lava WSA (ID-56-2) is located in Lincoln County two miles northeast of Shoshone, Idaho. The WSA includes 23,680 acres of BLM-administered lands. There are no split estate lands within the area (see Table 1). The WSA is bounded on the north by a paved county road, the Burmah Road. Unnamed, nonsystem dirt roads along with private and state lands form the eastern, western and remainder of the northern boundary. The southern boundary is formed by the Union Pacific Railroad right-of-way and private lands.

The Lava WSA is located on a flat plain. The majority of the WSA is an older lava flow exhibiting examples of pressure ridges and pahoehoe lava. (Pahoehoe lava has a smooth or ropey surface spread chiefly through tubes and characterized by round vesicles. Pahoehoe is the Hawaiian word for "ropey coils.") The Big Wood River channel lies along portions of the WSA's western boundary. Most of the river's flow is diverted for irrigation use before it reaches the WSA boundary.

The dominant vegetation is sagebrush and grasses. There are small shrubs which resemble ferns in shaded portions of the WSA and many lichens of different colors on the exposed surfaces of the lava. Several species of wildlife including deer, coyotes and sage grouse are found within the WSA.

The WSA was studied under Section 603 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) in the Shoshone/Sun Valley Final Environmental Impact Statement, Wilderness (EIS), filed in April 1986. Two alternatives were analyzed in the EIS: a no wilderness alternative, which is the recommendation of this report; and an all wilderness alternative.

2. Recommendation and Rationale

0 acres recommended for wilderness

23,680 acres recommended for nonwilderness

The recommendation for the Lava WSA is to release all 23,680 acres for nonwilderness uses. The environmentally preferable alternative is the all wilderness alternative. It would cause the least change from the natural environment over the long term. The recommendation would use all practical means to avoid or minimize adverse environmental impacts. All 23,680 acres of federal land within the WSA are recommended nonsuitable for wilderness designation and are shown as the Lava WSA on the Lava Proposal map.

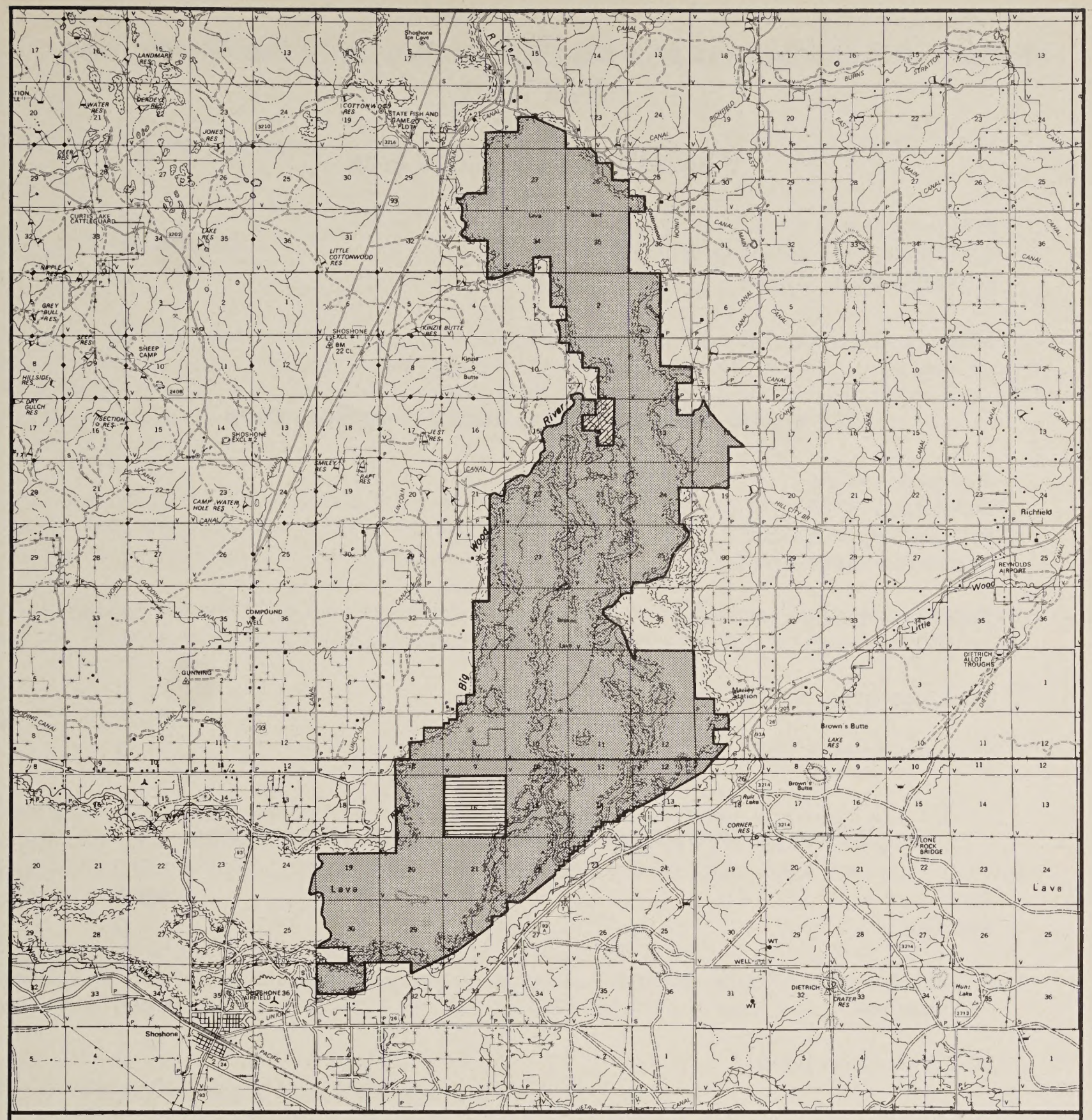
The most significant factor considered in making the nonwilderness recommendation for the WSA is the relatively low quality of the existing wilderness values. While the WSA contained the wilderness values necessary for study, these values marginally qualified the area for WSA status. Although the Lava WSA's overall appearance is generally natural, several areas in the WSA have been visibly impacted by the works of humans. Naturalness along portions of the eastern boundary has been reduced by the dull reddish color exposed after removal of the surface lava rock. Vehicle trails and range developments including pipelines and corrals also detract from natural values in the central part of the WSA. Agricultural activity and boundary roads are obvious from all edges of the WSA.

The Lava WSA is predominantly an older soil covered lava flow which, because of its size, provides outstanding opportunities for solitude and isolation as well as primitive camping and hiking. The quality of these opportunities, however, is comparable to those found in older lava flows of similar size throughout the Shoshone District. The WSA contains no special features that would benefit from wilderness designation.

The Great Basin Province/Desert Ecosystem (3130-39) is the only ecosystem represented in the WSA. The Craters of the Moon Wilderness (43,243 acres) administered by the National Park Service (NPS) currently represents this ecosystem in the NWPS. Designation of the Lava WSA as wilderness would not add an unrepresented ecosystem to the NWPS.

The potential for unauthorized agricultural and mineral uses along the Lava WSA's boundaries would complicate management as wilderness. Boundary fences, signs and intensive patrols by personnel with law enforcement capability would be required to maintain the Lava WSA's existing marginal wilderness values.

The WSA requires intensive grazing management to maintain existing uses. With the recommendation, existing levels of grazing can be maintained through brush control and seeding with mechanical equipment.



RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS

RECOMMENDED FOR NONWILDERNESS

LAND OUTSIDE WSA RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS

SPLIT ESTATE

STATE

PRIVATE

N

1 0 1 2 3

Scale in Miles

ID-56-2
LAVA
PROPOSAL

MARCH 1988

Table 1 -- Land Status and Acreage Summary of the Study Area
LAVA WSA

Within Wilderness Study Area

BLM (surface and subsurface)	23,680
Split Estate (BLM surface only)	0
Inholdings (state, private)	0
Total	23,680

Within the Recommended Wilderness Boundary

BLM (within WSA)	0
BLM (outside WSA)	0
Split Estate (within WSA)	0
Split Estate (outside WSA)	0
Total BLM Land Recommended for Wilderness	0
Inholdings (state, private)	0
State land (outside WSA)	0

Within the Area Not Recommended for Wilderness

BLM	23,680
Split Estate	0
Total BLM Land Not Recommended for Wilderness	23,680
Inholdings (state, private)	0

3. Criteria Considered in Developing the Wilderness Recommendations

Wilderness Characteristics

A. Naturalness

Seven vehicle trails totaling 10.8 miles are present in the Lava WSA. Many of these are extremely faint and receive little vehicle use. One trail is used regularly to place livestock salt in the WSA. The trails are screened by brush and most are not visible when viewed from a few feet away. They do not noticeably affect the naturalness of the WSA. The pipelines and corrals within the WSA do detract from naturalness in the vicinity of the developments.

Small areas along the WSA's eastern boundary have been damaged by unauthorized removal of veneer basalt. Areas where the rock has been removed are distinguished by the dull reddish surface exposed after removal of the overlying black lava. These areas total about 40 acres and are obvious at close range.

Natural stream channels along the east and west boundaries of the WSA have been used as part of a canal system. No structures have been built in these streambeds but the water level fluctuates greatly.

B. Solitude

The WSA offers opportunities for solitude, primarily because of its relatively large size. Although the topography is basically flat, some topographic relief is provided by the lava formations in the WSA. However, the lack of good screening lessens opportunities for solitude when several users are in the same part of the WSA.

Agricultural land is adjacent to the WSA along large sections of the western and southeastern boundary. Farming activities can be seen and heard from several places within the WSA. The sites and sounds of agricultural activity adjacent to the WSA are overwhelming and detract from a feeling of solitude.

C. Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

The WSA provides a diversity of primitive recreation opportunities. These include photography, hiking, camping and nature study. Some lava tubes within the WSA are available for exploring and study. The rugged terrain and harsh conditions enhance the challenge of hiking and camping. However, the lack of destinations diminishes the quality of these opportunities for some users.

D. Special Features

The WSA has no significant special features.

Diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System

A. Assessing the Diversity of Natural Systems and Features as Represented by Ecosystems

Wilderness designation of the Lava WSA would add an ecosystem presently represented in the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS) by one designated area with 30,245 acres. There are 11 other BLM areas in the state under study with this ecosystem. This information is summarized in Table 2.

TABLE 2

Ecosystem Representation

Bailey-Kuchler Classification	NWPS Areas areas	NWPS Areas acres	Other BLM Studies areas	Other BLM Studies acres
Intermountain Sagebrush Province/Desert vegetation largely absent				
		NATIONWIDE		
Desert Ecosystem	1	30,245	12	870,403
		IDAHO		
Desert Ecosystem	1	30,245	11	646,687
		NEVADA		
Desert Ecosystem	0	0	1	223,716

B. Expanding the Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive Recreation Within a Day's Driving Time (Five Hours) of Major Population Centers

The Lava WSA is within a five-hour drive of two major population centers. Table 3 summarizes the number and acreage of designated areas and other BLM study areas within a five-hour drive of the population center.

Table 3

Wilderness Opportunities for Residents of Major Population Centers

Population Centers	NWPS Areas		Other BLM Studies	
	areas	acres	areas	acres
Boise, Idaho/Salt Lake City, Utah[1]	16	4,741,570	141	5,374,250

[1]Salt Lake City, Utah, and vicinity includes other cities of Provo, Orem and Ogden, Utah.

C. Balancing the Geographic Distribution of Wilderness Areas

The Lava WSA would not contribute to balancing the geographic distribution of areas within the NWPS. The NPS-administered Craters of the Moon Wilderness (43,243 acres), representing a similar landform and ecosystem, is a one-hour drive to the northeast. The lava flow wilderness values within the Craters of the Moon Wilderness are superior in every respect to those of the Lava WSA. Therefore, designation of the Lava WSA as wilderness would not help balance the geographic distribution of opportunities to attain diverse wilderness experiences.

Manageability

The WSA could be managed as wilderness. There are no private rights or conflicts within the area which would affect the ability to retain wilderness values. Much of the WSA's southeastern, eastern and western boundaries are located along legal subdivisions adjacent to agricultural land. Farming trespass has occurred along these boundaries. Easily accessible, these areas have also been subject to unauthorized removal of veneer basalt.

There would be significant administrative problems and costs associated with management of the area. Wilderness management would require intensive patrols of the area by personnel with law enforcement capability, and boundary fences and signs surrounding the area.

Energy and Minerals Resource Values

Except for the state land inholding, all surface and mineral estates in the WSA are in federal ownership and are open to mineral entry. The Lava WSA is considered prospectively valuable for both oil and gas and for geothermal resources. The entire WSA has a low-to-moderate favorability for low-to-intermediate temperature geothermal resources based on limited well data and by analogy with surrounding areas.

The WSA is classified as having low potential for other leasable minerals based on an unfavorable geologic environment (Frederickson and Fernette 1983). There are no mineral leases within the WSA. The WSA is classified as unfavorable for locatable mineral resources based on an unfavorable geologic environment. There are no mining claims within the WSA.

Veneer basalt of building stone quality occurs on the northern edge of the WSA and probably occurs elsewhere in the area. It has been illegally exploited. There have been no sales of building stone within the WSA.

Impacts on Resources

The following comparative impact table summarizes the effects on pertinent resources for all the alternatives considered including designation or nondesignation of the entire WSA as wilderness.

Table 4
Comparative Summary of the Impacts by Alternative
WSA ID-56-2 (LAVA)

ISSUE TOPICS	PROPOSED ACTION (NO WILDERNESS/NO ACTION)	ALL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE
Impacts on Wilderness Values	The area's marginal naturalness and opportunities for solitude would be slightly reduced by new range developments, brush control and continued ORV use.	All wilderness values would receive long-term Congressional protection. Maintenance and construction of range developments would slightly reduce the area's marginal naturalness and opportunities for solitude. Elimination of ORV use would improve the area's naturalness and opportunities for solitude.
Impacts on Recreational ORV Use	There would be no impact on recreational ORV use.	Recreational ORV use of 100 visitor days would be foregone annually. The impact of shifting this use to other public lands would be negligible.
Impacts on Development of Mineral Resources	Potential mineral resources would be available for development. This includes low to moderate favorability for low temperature geothermal resources. There would be no impact on development of mineral resources.	Development of potential mineral resources would be foregone. This includes low to moderate potential for low temperature geothermal resources.
Impacts on Grazing Facility Maintenance and Construction	There would be no impact on grazing facility maintenance and construction.	There would be no seeding on 2,200 acres of brush control.

Local Social and Economic Considerations

Social and economic factors were not considered a significant issue in the study.

Summary of WSA-Specific Public Comments

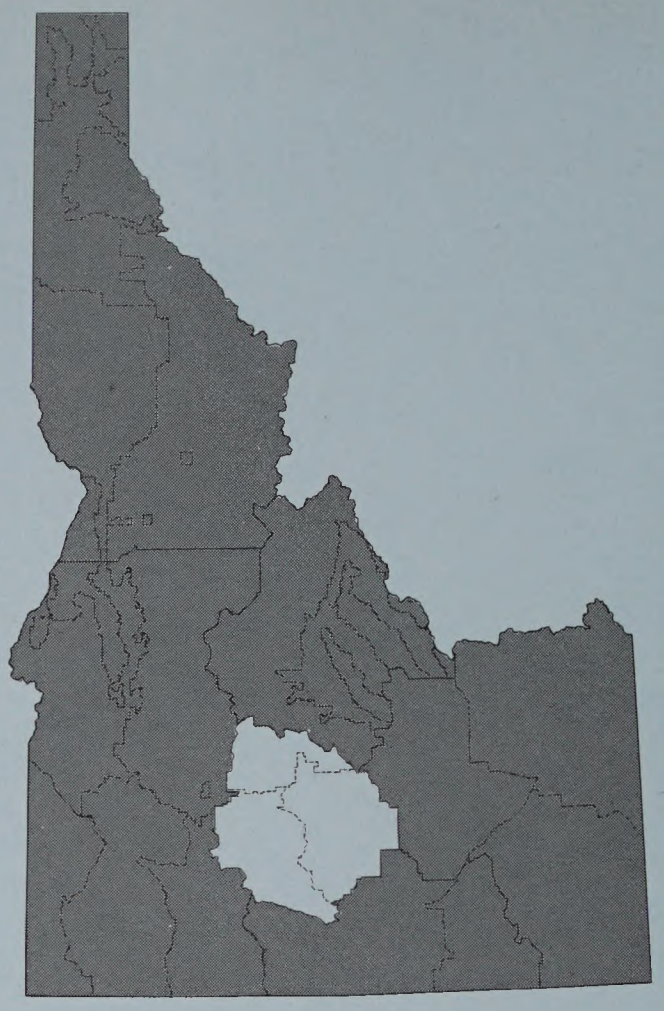
Public involvement occurred throughout the wilderness review process. During public review of the Draft EIS, four comments supporting wilderness designation of the Lava WSA were received. Two of these contained no supporting reasons. Comments supporting wilderness cited preservation values and the area's contribution to expanding diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System. Three comments opposed wilderness designation of the area. Two of these had no supporting reasons. The letter with supporting reasons cited the area's low wilderness potential.

The U.S. Department of Energy, Bureau of Reclamation, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service, Federal Highway Administration, Environmental Protection Agency, the Idaho Department of Fish and Game, Idaho Department of Health and Welfare, Idaho Department of Lands, Idaho Transportation Department, Idaho Department of Water Resources and Idaho State Historical Society commented on the Draft EIS. None of the agencies' comments specifically addressed the Lava WSA.

SUMMARY ANALYSIS OF SPECIFIC WSA RECOMMENDATIONS

MONUMENT WILDERNESS

MONUMENT WILDERNESS



LEGEND

DISTRICT BOUNDARY

RESOURCE AREA BOUNDARY

WILDERNESS STUDY AREA

MONUMENT

1. Raven's Eye
2. Little Deer
3. Bear Den Butte
4. Sand Butte
5. Shoshone
6. Shale Butte

BENNETT HILLS

RESOURCE AREA

SHOSHONE

RESOURCE AREA

MONUMENT

GREAT RIFT

DISTRICT

AREA

0 10 20 30 40 50

Scale in Miles

Shale Butte Wilderness Study Area

1. The Study Area -- 15,968 acres

The Shale Butte WSA (ID-57-2) is located in Lincoln County 26 miles east of Shoshone, Idaho. The WSA includes 15,968 acres of BLM-administered lands. There are no split estate lands or inholdings within the area (see Table 1). The WSA boundaries are formed primarily by the following dirt roads: on the west by an unnamed nonsystem road and County Road 3208, the Trapper Cabin Road; on the north by BLM Road 3208, the Trapper Cabin Road; and on the east by an unnamed nonsystem road. The southern boundary is located along a legal section line.

The Shale Butte area is an older lava flow which rises 100 to 300 feet above the surrounding plain. The lava flow has been largely covered by wind-deposited soil but exposed lava formations are common. The perimeter of the lava flow is rugged with sloping basalt faces up to 50 feet high. Elevations within the WSA range from 4,250 feet at the southern boundary to 4,578 feet at the summit of Shale Butte.

The present dominant vegetation in the WSA, especially the southern part of the area, is cheatgrass, a non-native species that invaded after repeated wildfires. Periodic large wildfires, limited native grass seed in the area and the competitive nature of cheatgrass prevent the occurrence of the potential natural plant community, Wyoming big sagebrush with a bluebunch wheatgrass and associated grass and forb understory.

The WSA was studied under Section 603 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) and included in the Monument Final Environmental Impact Statement, Wilderness (EIS), filed in July 1987. Two alternatives were analyzed in the EIS: a no wilderness alternative, which is the recommendation of this report; and an all wilderness alternative.

2. Recommendation and Rationale

0 acres recommended for wilderness

15,968 acres recommended for nonwilderness

The recommendation for the Shale Butte WSA is to release all 15,968 acres for nonwilderness uses. The environmentally preferable alternative is the all wilderness alternative. It would cause the least change from the natural environment over the long term. The recommendation would use all practical means to avoid or minimize adverse environmental impacts. However, the recommendation for this WSA allows for restoration of vegetative diversity in an area where fire and invasion of non-native cheatgrass has created a vegetative "monoculture." The recommendation would facilitate implementation of the Wildhorse Shrub Restoration Plan (1987), returning the area to a more natural ecosystem in the long term.

All 15,968 acres of federal land within the WSA are recommended nonsuitable for wilderness designation and are shown as the Shale Butte WSA on the Shale Butte Proposal map.

The no wilderness recommendation for this area is based on several factors. The natural values of the Shale Butte WSA are marginal. The no wilderness recommendation would allow greater flexibility to restore and maintain big game habitat and control wildfire in the Wildhorse area of the Monument Resource Area. In addition, the Shale Butte WSA would not add diversity to the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS), it does not exhibit any significant or unusual special features and it would be difficult to manage as wilderness.

Human imprints in the Shale Butte WSA are minimal and have little cumulative impact on the area's natural values. However, the WSA's naturalness has been significantly affected by a history of repeated large wildfires in the Wildhorse area. In 1981, the entire Shale Butte WSA burned. Cheatgrass, a non-native invader, prevents reestablishment of native plant species after a fire and is now a dominant species in the WSA. Shrub protection is a high priority fire management objective for the Shale Butte WSA (Monument Limited Fire Suppression Plan, BLM, 1985).

The Shale Butte WSA is within the area covered by the Wildhorse Greenstripping/Shrub Restoration Plan (1987). The purpose of the plan is to restore big game winter habitat burned by wildfires. Projects outlined in the plan are designed to decrease fire frequency, reduce fire size and reestablish shrubs and other vegetation in burned areas. Several areas in the Shale Butte WSA are identified for rehabilitation in the Wildhorse Plan. Wilderness management would preclude the use of mechanical equipment and non-native plant species in rehabilitation of these areas.

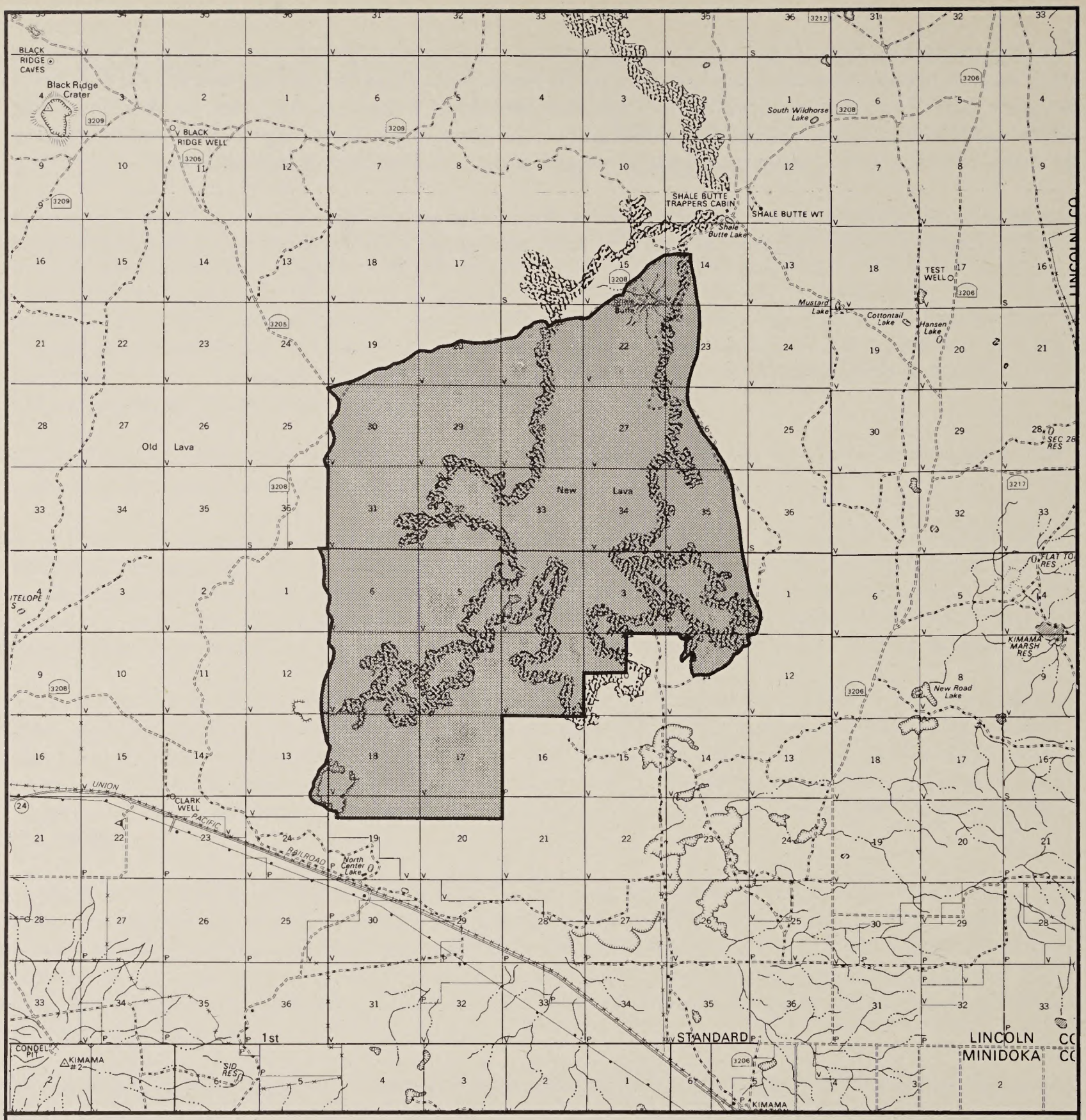
Wilderness management would also restrict fire suppression activities in the WSA. It is predicted that under wilderness management, fires would burn in the WSA every four years on the average. This would hamper shrub restoration and protection efforts and maintain cheatgrass as a dominant species.

Nondesignation is recommended because it would allow greater flexibility and savings in achieving the goals of the Wildhorse Plan. The no wilderness alternative would most likely result in a more natural ecosystem in the Shale Butte WSA in the long term.

The Great Basin Province/Desert Ecosystem (3130-39) is the only potential ecosystem presented in the WSA. The Craters of the Moon Wilderness (43,243 acres) administered by the National Park Service (NPS) currently represents this ecosystem in the NWPS. Designation of Shale Butte as wilderness would not add diversity to the NWPS.

The supplemental features of the Shale Butte WSA are not significant. Although the lava flows of Shale Butte are of interest because they exemplify volcanism on the Snake River Plain, they are not unique. All features of the Shale Butte lavas can be found in the Craters of the Moon Wilderness and other BLM WSAs in the Monument Resource Area. Two BLM sensitive species, the burrowing owl and long-billed curlew, may exist in the area. However, these species would not be affected if the area is not designated wilderness.

Existing livestock operations would affect opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation. These opportunities would be degraded by the sights and sounds of vehicles moving and servicing sheep camps on vehicle ways in the WSA.



RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS

RECOMMENDED FOR NONWILDERNESS

LAND OUTSIDE WSA RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS

SPLIT ESTATE

STATE

PRIVATE

1 0 1 2 3

Scale in Miles

ID-57-2
SHALE BUTTE
PROPOSAL

APRIL 1988

Table 1 -- Land Status and Acreage Summary of the Study Area
SHALE BUTTE WSA

Within Wilderness Study Area

BLM (surface and subsurface)	15,968
Split Estate (BLM surface only)	0
Inholdings (state, private)	0
Total	15,968

Within the Recommended Wilderness Boundary

BLM (within WSA)	0
BLM (outside WSA)	0
Split Estate (within WSA)	0
Split Estate (outside WSA)	0
Total BLM Land Recommended for Wilderness	0
Inholdings (state, private)	0
State land (outside WSA)	0

Within the Area Not Recommended for Wilderness

BLM	15,968
Split Estate	0
Total BLM Land Not Recommended for Wilderness	15,968
Inholdings (state, private)	0

3. Criteria Considered in Developing the Wilderness Recommendations

Wilderness Characteristics

A. Naturalness

The Shale Butte WSA is essentially natural in appearance. The majority of the WSA appears to the average viewer to be unaffected by human works.

Several species of wildlife including antelope, deer, bobcat, coyote, birds of prey and upland game and non-game are found in low numbers in the WSA. The area is historic mule deer and antelope winter range but has not been used much in recent years because of shrub cover loss through wildfire.

The most significant impact on the WSA's apparent naturalness is attributed to the area's fire history. Frequent wildfires have greatly reduced sagebrush throughout much of the WSA and the area around it. Cheatgrass, a non-native plant species, has become the WSA's dominant vegetation. However, to the uninformed visitor, the existing vegetation could be perceived as natural.

Three seeded areas are within the boundaries of the Shale Butte WSA. A 1,280 acre fire rehabilitation seeding is located on the WSA's southern edge. Sagebrush was seeded aerially in this area in 1972.

A 960 acre wildlife habitat rehabilitation seeding is located on the WSA's eastern edge. The aerial seeding of fourwing saltbush, bitterbrush and sagebrush was done in 1982.

The aerial seedings have had little or no impact on the natural values of the Shale Butte WSA. A 300-foot strip along the northern WSA boundary road was drill seeded with crested wheatgrass in 1982. The purpose of the crested wheatgrass seeding was two-fold: to form a fire-resistant greenstrip and to crowd out infestations of halogeton, a noxious weed poisonous to both wildlife and livestock. The crested wheatgrass seeding drill rows are somewhat evident along the northern boundary road of the WSA.

Six minor vehicle trails are found within the Shale Butte WSA. Prior to its blading, the route in T. 5 S., R. 22 E., Sections 21 and 28 was the longest and most noticeable of the routes. Generally, the trails have, or would have after rehabilitation, little cumulative effect on the natural values of the Shale Butte WSA.

B. Solitude

Outside sights and sounds somewhat diminish opportunities. Boundary roads are located on three sides of the WSA. Vehicles on these roads are visible from the periphery of the WSA. The boundary roads and traffic on them can be seen and occasionally heard from the WSA's higher elevations. In addition, the Union Pacific Railroad's main track lies two miles south of the WSA. The train traffic averages one train an hour and is noticeable from many locations in the southern part of the WSA. Visitors could hear the trains throughout most of the WSA on a quiet night.

C. Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

The Shale Butte WSA provides a variety of recreation opportunities. The rugged volcanic features and desert environment provide opportunities for camping, hiking and hunting. Nonmotorized recreation use in the WSA is estimated at less than 100 visitor days annually. The combination of monotonous landscape and lack of water and destination spots probably accounts for the low visitor use figures. Hot summer temperatures and cold winters limit visitor use to the spring and fall.

D. Special Features

The WSA does not contain any significant or unusual features.

Diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System

A. Assessing the Diversity of Natural System and Features as Represented by Ecosystems

Wilderness designation of the Shale Butte WSA would add an ecosystem presently represented in the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS). This ecosystem is represented by three designated areas with 76,699 acres. There are 35 other BLM areas in the state under study with this ecosystem. This information is summarized in Table 2.

TABLE 2

Ecosystem Representation

Bailey-Kuchler Classification	NWPS Areas areas	NWPS Areas acres	Other BLM Studies areas	Other BLM Studies acres
Dry Domain/Intermountain Sagebrush Province				
		NATIONWIDE		
Sagebrush Steppe Ecosystem	3	76,699	136	4,359,340
		IDAHO		
Sagebrush Steppe Ecosystem	1	12,997	35	949,916
		NEVADA		
Sagebrush Steppe Ecosystem	1	32,407	29	1,273,919
		CALIFORNIA		
Sagebrush Steppe Ecosystem	0	0	5	152,431
		OREGON		
Sagebrush Steppe Ecosystem	0	0	67	1,983,074

B. Expanding the Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive Recreation Within a Day's Driving Time (Five Hours) of Major Population Centers

The Shale Butte WSA is within a five-hour drive from Boise, Idaho. Table 3 summarizes the number and acreage of designated areas and other BLM study areas within a five-hour drive of the population center.

Table 3

Wilderness Opportunities for Residents of Major Population Centers

Population Centers	NWPS Areas		Other BLM Studies	
	areas	acres	areas	acres
Boise, Idaho	16	4,741,570	141	5,374,250

C. Balancing the Geographic Distribution of Wilderness Areas

The Shale Butte WSA would not contribute to balancing the geographic distribution of areas within the NWPS. The NPS-administered Craters of the Moon Wilderness (43,243 acres) is a one-hour drive to the north. The lava flow and vegetative values within the Craters of the Moon Wilderness are superior in every respect to those of the Shale Butte WSA. Therefore, designation of the Shale Butte WSA as wilderness would not help balance the geographic distribution of opportunities to attain diverse wilderness experiences.

Manageability

The Shale Butte WSA could be managed to maintain existing wilderness values. However, the existing natural values are marginal because of the destruction of native vegetation by wildfires and subsequent invasion of cheatgrass. Destruction of shrubs has greatly reduced the value of the area as big game winter habitat. Efforts to restore big game habitat and vegetative diversity would be limited under wilderness management because of prohibitions on the use of mechanical equipment.

Existing livestock operations would slightly complicate administration of wilderness. The primary use of vehicle ways in the northern and eastern parts of the WSA is for access to sheep bed grounds. From April 1 to June 15 and from October 16 to December 31, permittees use the ways to move and service sheep camps at the bed grounds. The sights and sounds of vehicle use at these times would degrade opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation.

Energy and Minerals Resource Values

The Shale Butte WSA has zero petroleum potential, is classified as not prospectively valuable for geothermal resources (BLM 1985) and has low potential for locatable and saleable minerals.

The mineral estates in the WSA are in federal ownership and are open to mineral entry. There are no mineral leases within the WSA. There are approximately 320 acres of mining claims within the WSA.

Impacts on Resources

The following comparative impact table summarizes the effects on pertinent resources for all alternatives considered including designation or nondesignation of the entire area as wilderness.

Table 4
Comparative Summary of the Impacts by Alternative
WSA ID-57-2 (SHALE BUTTE)

ISSUE TOPICS	PROPOSED ACTION (NO WILDERNESS/NO ACTION)	ALL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE
Impacts on Wilderness Values	Restoration of vegetation would improve big game habitat and would return the area to a more natural ecosystem in the long term. Surface-distributing fire suppression activities would moderately degrade apparent naturalness. Sheep camp related vehicle use would adversely impact opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation from April 16 to June 15 and from October 31 to December 31 in 15% of the WSA. Recreational ORV use would slightly reduce all wilderness values. Low-use vehicle trails would be maintained by ORV travel with the possibility of being expanded slightly. No increase in visitor use above current levels is projected.	All wilderness values would receive long-term Congressional protection. Wilderness values would be maintained on all 15,968 acres of the Shale Butte WSA. All wilderness values would benefit slightly because of the elimination of ORV use. Sheep camp related vehicle use would adversely impact opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation in approximately 15% of the WSA from April 16 to June 15 and from October 16 to December 31.
Impacts on Development of Locatable Mineral Resources	There would be no impact on development of locatable mineral resources. Potential mineral resources would be available for development.	Development of potential mineral resources would be foregone adversely affecting locatable mineral resources of low potential in the Shale Butte WSA.
Impacts on Livestock Grazing Operations	Existing sheep operating procedures would continue. The level of grazing use would decrease 40 AUMs or 2%.	Existing sheep operating procedures would continue. The level of grazing use would decrease 161 AUMs or 8%.
Impacts on Fire Management	There would be no impact on fire management.	Full suppression including use of pumper trucks, helicopters and bulldozers within the WSA would not occur.

Local Social and Economic Considerations

Social and economic factors were not considered a significant issue in the study.

Summary of WSA-Specific Public Comments

Public involvement occurred throughout the wilderness review process.

During public review of the Draft EIS, a total of nine comments supporting wilderness designation were received. Eight of these comments contained no supporting reasons for their position. One comment supported wilderness designation because the area offered unique wilderness opportunities and deserves protection. No comments opposing wilderness designation were received.

The U.S. Department of Energy, Bureau of Reclamation, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service, U.S. Department of Transportation, Environmental Protection Agency, the Idaho Department of Fish and Game, Department of Health and Welfare, Department of Lands, Transportation Department, Department of Water Resources and Idaho State Historical Society commented on the Draft EIS.

Sand Butte Wilderness Study Area

1. The Study Area -- 20,792 acres

The Sand Butte WSA (ID-57-8) is located in Lincoln County 35 miles northeast of Shoshone, Idaho. The WSA includes 20,792 acres of BLM-administered lands. There are no split estate lands within the WSA (see Table 1). The WSA's boundaries are formed by the following dirt roads: on the west and south by BLM Road 3212, the South Pagari Road and an unnamed nonsystem jeep trail; and on the north and east by BLM Road 3209, the North Pagari Road and an old cat line.

The Sand Butte WSA is generally composed of an older lava flow covered by wind-deposited soils. Although the WSA is relatively flat, the underlying lava flow is exposed in places. In these areas, lava formations such as pressure ridges, blisters and subsidence craters are common.

Sand Butte is the most prominent feature of the WSA. The Butte is an excellent example of a maar crater formed by a violent explosion caused by the rapid generation of steam when erupting magma contacted ground water. The Butte rises rapidly above the surrounding terrain. The cone is surrounded by a ring of ejected volcanic material. A portion of the crater's interior is covered by a broken lava lake. Overall, the cone appears to be a natural sand amphitheater.

Elevations range from 4,250 feet along the WSA's southern boundary to 4,974 feet at the summit of Sand Butte.

Vegetation generally consists of sagebrush interspersed with grasses and forbs. Although some old growth sagebrush may reach heights of six feet, the average canopy is three to four feet high.

The WSA was studied under Section 603 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) and included in the Monument Final Environmental Impact Statement, (EIS) Wilderness, filed in July 1987. Three alternatives were analyzed in the EIS: an enhanced wilderness alternative, which is the recommendation of this report; a no wilderness alternative and an all wilderness alternative.

2. Recommendation and Rationale

22,543 acres recommended for wilderness

0 acres recommended for nonwilderness

The recommendation for the Sand Butte WSA is to designate 22,543 acres as wilderness. The environmentally preferable alternative is the all wilderness alternative. It would cause the least change from the natural environment over the long term. The entire 20,792 acres of federal land within the Sand Butte WSA are recommended for wilderness designation. An additional 1,751 acres of the federal lands adjacent to the WSA, but not part of the WSA, are also recommended for wilderness designation because they enhance the manageability of the area as wilderness. With that addition, a total of 22,543 acres are recommended for wilderness.

The wilderness recommendation will also apply to any inholding acreage acquired through purchase or exchange with willing landowners. Two state land inholdings, totaling 1,280 acres, have been identified for acquisition.

Federal lands recommended for wilderness designation within the WSA and adjacent to the WSA are shown on the Sand Butte Proposal map.

The area recommended for wilderness has outstanding wilderness values and exhibits special geological features of scientific and educational value. Designation of the Sand Butte WSA and adjacent suitable federal lands would add landform diversity to the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS) in Idaho. The area recommended for designation could be managed as wilderness.

The 22,543 acres recommended for wilderness designation are apparently natural. Human imprints in the area include six vehicle trails and a fence. Small pockets of crested wheatgrass (a non-native plant species) seeded aerially in 1975 occur in the northern part of the WSA. Cheatgrass, a non-native species that invades after wildfires, is also present in the WSA.

The area's large size and remoteness, in combination with the topographic relief provided by a variety of lava formations, offer outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation. Recreation opportunities include camping, hiking, hunting, sightseeing, photography, spelunking and nature study. The scenic Sand Butte Crater is the primary destination point for visitors to the area.

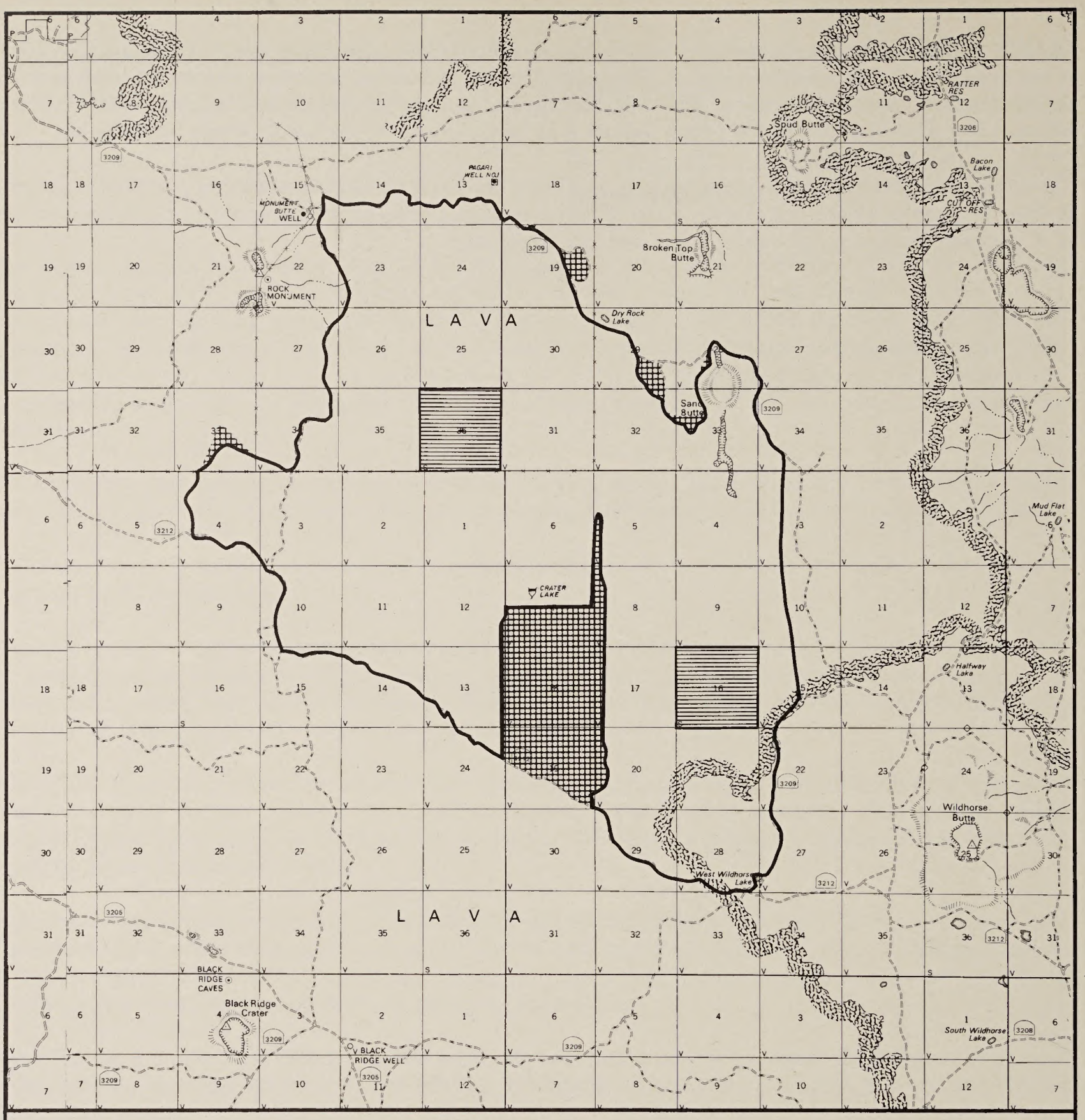
Sand Butte is a unique formation among the many other volcanic cones on the Snake River Plain. The steep-sided, deep, symmetrical crater bowl is an excellent example of a maar crater. As such, it is of scientific and educational interest.

The Intermountain Sagebrush Province/Sagebrush Steppe Ecosystem (3130-49) is the ecosystem represented in the area recommended as wilderness. In Idaho, this Bailey-Kuchler classification ecosystem is already represented in the NWPS by the Craters of the Moon Wilderness administered by the National Park Service (NPS). The Craters of the Moon Wilderness includes many excellent examples of Snake River plain volcanism and desert lava flow ecosystem. However, the Craters of the Moon Wilderness does not include a good example of a maar crater. Designation of the Sand Butte area would add landform diversity to the NWPS in Idaho.

Designation of the adjacent 1,751 acre parcel of federal land as wilderness would enhance manageability. The addition of the parcel creates a more easily recognized southern boundary, thereby reducing the potential for inadvertent unauthorized off-road vehicle use in the designated area.

Conflicts with existing resource uses are limited in the Sand Butte WSA. Existing grazing management activities in the recommended area would continue. Sheep camp related vehicle use on ways would impact opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation. However, because less than ten percent of the designated area would be affected over a limited time period (April through mid-June every year), the impact would be negligible.

The enhanced wilderness alternative would have an adverse impact on the implementation of proposed rangeland development projects and levels of grazing use. Wilderness management restrictions would preclude construction of a proposed pipeline project, stock water well and access road.



T. 3 S. / T. 4 S. / T. 5 S.

R. 21 E. | R. 22 E. | R. 22 E. | R. 23

RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS

RECOMMENDED FOR NONWILDERNESS

LAND OUTSIDE WSA RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS

SPLIT ESTATE

STATE

PRIVATE

N

1 0 1 2 3

Scale in Miles

ID-57-8
SAND BUTTE
PROPOSAL

APRIL 1988

Table 1 -- Land Status and Acreage Summary of the Study Area
SAND BUTTE WSA

Within Wilderness Study Area

BLM (surface and subsurface)	20,792
Split Estate (BLM surface only)	0
Inholdings (state, private)	1,280
Total	22,072

Within the Recommended Wilderness Boundary

BLM (within WSA)	20,792
BLM (outside WSA)	1,751
Split Estate (within WSA)	0
Split Estate (outside WSA)	0
Total BLM Land Recommended for Wilderness	22,543
Inholdings (state, private)	1,280
State land (outside WSA)	0

Within the Area Not Recommended for Wilderness

BLM	0
Split Estate	0
Total BLM Land Not Recommended for Wilderness	0
Inholdings (state, private)	0

3. Criteria Considered in Developing the Wilderness Recommendations

Wilderness Characteristics

A. Naturalness

The Sand Butte WSA is natural in appearance. The majority of the WSA is unaffected by human impacts. Six vehicle trails, totaling approximately 7.5 miles, are located within the WSA. The trails are two-track with vegetation growing in the middle so visual impacts are minimal.

Several small pockets of crested wheatgrass, totaling 160 acres, exist on the WSA's southern boundary. The aerial seedings have irregular edges and blend well with surrounding vegetation. Cheatgrass, a non-native species that invades after wildfires, also affects the naturalness of the WSA. A 6.75-mile fence is the third development within the WSA. The steel post and barbed-wire fence is visible up to 100 yards in some places.

B. Solitude

The WSA provides outstanding opportunities for solitude. The area's topographic variety, vegetation, remoteness, size and proximity to the Raven's Eye WSA combine to provide numerous outstanding opportunities for solitude.

A boundary road surrounds the WSA. Vehicles on this road are visible from the fringe of the WSA. The boundary road and its traffic can also be seen or heard from the WSA's higher elevations. The impact of the road is insignificant in the area as a whole.

C. Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

The Sand Butte WSA provides a variety of recreation opportunities. The rugged volcanic features and desert environment of the WSA provide outstanding opportunities for camping, hiking, hunting, sightseeing, photography, spelunking and nature study. These types of recreation uses are estimated at less than 100 visitor days annually. The combination of rugged terrain and lack of water or designation spots probably accounts for the low visitor use figures. Visitation to the area usually occurs ins the spring and fall.

D. Special Features

The area provides good opportunities for geologic study. Sand Butte is an outstanding example of a maar crater which was formed from the rapid generation of steam when ground water was contacted by erupting magma. It is one of the few maar craters on the entire Snake River Plain and perhaps the best example of this type of feature. The crater has a surrounding rim constructed of material ejected from the crater. The crater is a notable landmark because of its prominence and unique appearance relative to the surrounding landscape.

Diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System

A. Assessing the Diversity of Natural Systems and Features as Represented by Ecosystems

Wilderness designation of the Sand Butte WSA would add an ecosystem presently represented in the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS). This ecosystem is represented by one area with 30,245 acres. There are 11 other BLM areas in the state under study with this ecosystem. This information is summarized in Table 2.

TABLE 2

Ecosystem Representation

Bailey-Kuchler Classification		NWPS Areas areas	NWPS Areas acres	Other BLM Studies areas	Other BLM Studies acres
Intermountain Province	Sagebrush				
			NATIONWIDE		
Desert-Vegetation Absent Ecosystem	Largely	1	0,245	12	870,403
			IDAHO		
Desert-Vegetation Absent Ecosystem	Largely	1	30,245	11	646,687
			NEVADA		
Desert-Vegetation Absent Ecosystem	Largely	0	0	1	223,716

B. Expanding the Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive Recreation Within a Day's Driving Time (Five Hours) of Major Population Centers

The Sand Butte WSA is within a five-hour drive from Boise, Idaho. Table 3 summarizes the number and acreage of designated areas and other BLM study areas within a five-hour drive of the population centers.

Table 3

Wilderness Opportunities for Residents of Major Population Centers

Population Centers	NWPS Areas		Other BLM Studies	
	areas	acres	areas	acres
Boise, Idaho	16	4,741,570	141	5,374,250

C. Balancing the Geographic Distribution of Wilderness Areas

The Sand Butte WSA would not contribute to balancing the geographic distribution of areas within the NWPS. The NPS-administered Craters of the Moon Wilderness (43,243 acres) is 20 miles to the northwest. The lava flow wilderness values within the Craters of the Moon Wilderness are superior in every respect to those of the Sand Butte WSA, with the exception of the excellent example of a maar crater. Sand Butte is the best opportunity in the region to include a maar crater in the wilderness system.

Manageability

The Sand Butte WSA can reasonably be managed as wilderness to preserve values now present in the area. Conflicts with existing resource uses are limited.

Continuation of existing livestock operations in the same manner and degree represents a minor manageability conflict. Sheep camp related vehicle use on vehicle trails in the WSA would impact opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation. However, the vehicle use would affect less than ten percent of the WSA for a limited time during the year (April through mid-June) so the impact is not significant.

There are two state inholdings, totaling 1,280 acres, in the WSA. The two sections are presently used solely for grazing. There is no vehicle access to the parcels. Based on the USGS/Bureau of Mines mineral reports for the area, mineral development on the state sections is not anticipated. The two parcels have been identified for acquisition through an exchange with the state.

The Raven's Eye WSA lies adjacent and to the north, separated from the Sand Butte WSA by a road. This 67,110 acre WSA has similar high-quality wilderness values and is also recommended suitable for wilderness designation. The proximity of this WSA enhances the manageability of the Sand Butte WSA.

The configuration of the southern boundary of the Sand Butte WSA presents another minor manageability problem. The boundary of the 1,751 acre parcel of non-WSA land that protrudes into the WSA does not conform to any easily recognizable topographic features. Off-road vehicles could easily stray across the WSA boundary in this area. Inclusion of the non-WSA parcel into the designated wilderness would enhance manageability. Moving the southern boundary to a well-defined and well-signed road would reduce the potential for unauthorized vehicle use in the designated wilderness.

Energy and Minerals Resource Values

The Sand Butte WSA has zero petroleum potential (Miller 1983), is classified as not prospectively valuable for geothermal resources (BLM 1985), and has low potential for locatable and saleable minerals.

The mineral estates in the WSA are in federal ownership and are open to mineral entry. There are no mining claims or mineral leases within the WSA.

Impacts on Resources

The following comparative impact table summarizes the effects on pertinent resources for all the alternatives considered including designation or nondesignation of the entire area as wilderness.

Table 4
Comparative Summary of the Impacts by Alternative
WSA ID-57-8 (SAND BUTTE)

ISSUE TOPICS	PROPOSED ACTION (ENHANCED WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE)	NO WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE	ALL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE
Impacts on Wilderness Values	All wilderness values would receive long-term Congressional protection. Wilderness values would be maintained on all 22,543 acres recommended suitable for designation. All wilderness values would benefit slightly from the elimination of recreational ORV use. Acquisition of 1,200 acres of state land inholdings would enhance natural values and opportunities for solitude. Sheep camp related vehicle access would adversely affect opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation from April through mid-June in less than 10% of the WSA. Restrictions on fire management could result in larger wildfires increasing the potential for the spread of cheatgrass.	Surface disturbance associated with construction of new range developments in the WSA (1.75 miles of pipeline, 2 troughs, a well and 1.8 miles of road) would degrade apparent naturalness. Vehicle use to inspect and maintain range developments and to haul and service sheep camps would degrade opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation in the spring and fall. Recreational ORV use would degrade all wilderness values. Low-use vehicle trails would be maintained by ORV travel with the possibility of being expanded slightly. However, increase in visitor use is projected above current levels and impacts would be confined to the existing trails. Surface-disturbing fire suppression activities would moderately degrade apparent naturalness.	All wilderness values would receive long-term Congressional protection. Wilderness values would be maintained on all 20,792 acres of the Sand Butte WSA. All wilderness values would benefit slightly from the elimination of recreational ORV use. Acquisition of 1,280 acres of state land inholdings would enhance natural values and opportunities for solitude. Sheep camp related vehicle access would adversely affect opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation from April through mid-June in approximately 10% of the WSA. Restrictions on fire management could result in larger wildfires increasing the potential for the spread of cheatgrass.
Impacts on Recreational ORV and Hunting Use	Recreational ORV use of less than 500 visitor days would be foregone annually. The impacts of shifting this use to other public lands would be negligible. Vehicle access for hunters would not be allowed.	There would be no impact on recreational ORV and hunting use.	Recreational ORV use of less than 500 visitor days would be foregone annually. The impacts of shifting this use to other public lands would be negligible. Vehicle access for hunters would not be allowed.
Impacts on Livestock Grazing Operations (continued next page)	Existing cattle and sheep grazing practices would continue. The overall level of active grazing preference would decrease 422 AUMs or 15.2%. A 1.75-mile pipeline with troughs and a stock water well and access road would be built outside the boundaries of the area recommended suitable.	Existing cattle and sheep grazing practices would continue. The overall level of grazing use would decrease 101 AUMS or 3.9%. Vehicle use to inspect and maintain a 6.75-mile allotment boundary fence would continue. A 1.75-mile pipeline with troughs and livestock water well and access road would be built.	Existing cattle and sheep grazing practices would continue. The overall level of active grazing preference would decrease 404 AUMs or 15.8%. Inspection of a 6.75-mile allotment boundary fence would be on foot or horseback with motorized vehicle support for repairs. A 1.75-mile pipeline with troughs and a stock water well and access road would be built outside the WSA boundaries.
Impacts on Fire Management	Full suppression including use of pumper trucks, helicopters and bulldozers within the area would not occur.	There would be no impact on fire management.	Full suppression including use of pumper trucks, helicopters and bulldozers within the WSA would not occur.

Local Social and Economic Considerations

Designation of the area as wilderness would have no or minimal effect on the local social and economic situation.

Summary of WSA-Specific Public Comments

Public involvement occurred throughout the wilderness review process.

During public review of the Draft EIS, thirteen comments supporting wilderness designation were received. Nine of these comments contained no supporting reasons for their position. The four comments with supporting reasons cited the area's unique opportunities, natural values, diversity and manageability. No comments opposing wilderness designation were received.

The U.S. Department of Energy, Bureau of Reclamation, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service, U.S. Department of Transportation, Environmental Protection Agency, the State of Idaho's Department of Fish and Game, Department of Health and Welfare, Department of Lands, Transportation Department, Department of Water Resources and Idaho State Historical Society commented on the Draft EIS. None of their comments specifically addressed the Sand Butte WSA.

Raven's Eye Wilderness Study Area

1. The Study Area -- 67,110 acres

The Raven's Eye WSA (ID-57-10) is located in Blaine and Lincoln Counties two miles east of Carey, Idaho. The WSA includes 67,110 acres of BLM-administered lands. There are no split estate lands within the area. There are 1,920 acres of state land inholdings within the WSA (see Table 1). The WSA boundaries are formed primarily by the following roads: on the north and east by BLM and County Road 3206, the Carey - Kimama Road and two unnamed, nonsystem dirt roads; and on the south by BLM Road 3209, the North Pagari Road. The boundary also follows state section lines in five separate areas. Most of the western and northern boundary is formed by private property lines.

The Raven's Eye WSA is characterized by two distinct landforms. The southern portion of the WSA is composed of older lava flows covered by wind-blown soils up to five feet deep. These older flows contain three prominent volcanic cones: Spud Butte, Broken Top Butte and an unnamed cone north of Wagon Butte. The topography of the older flows is flat to gently rolling, broken by buttes, depressions and dry lakes.

The remainder of the WSA (approximately 55 percent) is covered by part of the Craters of the Moon Lava Flow. The younger flow has a rough, undulating surface broken by numerous pressure ridges, lava cascades, subsidence craters, lava blisters and other volcanic features. Both pahoehoe (Hawaiian word for "ropey coils") and aa ("hard on the feet") lava exist in this flow. Elevations in the WSA range from 4,600 feet in the southern portion to 5,003 feet at the summit of Spud Butte.

Vegetation varies with the topography. The soil-covered older flows are dominated by brush with interspersed grasses and forbs. The height of the brush canopy averages four feet. A small area (1,140 acres) on the southwest edge has been planted in crested wheatgrass. On the younger Craters of the Moon flow, vegetation is sparse.

The WSA was studied under Section 603 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) and included in the Monument Final Environmental Impact Statement, Wilderness, filed in July 1987. Two alternatives were analyzed in the EIS: an all wilderness alternative, which is the recommendation of this report; and a no wilderness alternative.

2. Recommendation and Rationale

67,110 acres recommended for wilderness

0 acres recommended for nonwilderness

The recommendation for the Raven's Eye WSA is the all wilderness alternative. The environmentally preferable alternative is the all wilderness alternative. It would cause the least change from the natural environment over the long term. All 67,110 acres of federal land within the Raven's Eye are recommended for wilderness designation.

The wilderness recommendation will also apply to any inholding acreage acquired through purchase or exchange with willing landowners. Three state land sections, totaling 1,920 acres, have been identified for acquisition. Federal lands recommended for wilderness designation within the WSA are shown on the Raven's Eye Proposal map.

The WSA has outstanding wilderness values and geological features of special interest. The area recommended for designation could be managed as wilderness. The southern portion of the WSA is composed of older lava flows covered by wind-blown soils up to five feet deep. Although this portion of the WSA is also natural appearing, it is not pristine. Six two-track trails with a total length of 20 miles traverse the soil-covered lava. The trails are used infrequently by sheepherders and hunters, and vegetation is established between the tracks. Some of the trails are rarely used and vegetation is growing in the tracks. One trail is partially covered with wind-blown sand. In addition to these vehicle trails, human imprints include a fence, enclosure, stock water pond and an old canal. These developments are screened by topography and vegetation. Two aerial seedings of crested wheatgrass (a non-native species) are found along the southwest and south-central edge of the WSA. These seedings consist of numerous broken patches of wheatgrass in pockets of less than ten acres, broken by rocky outcrops and native vegetation. Cheatgrass, a non-native species that invades after wildfire, is also present in this part of the WSA.

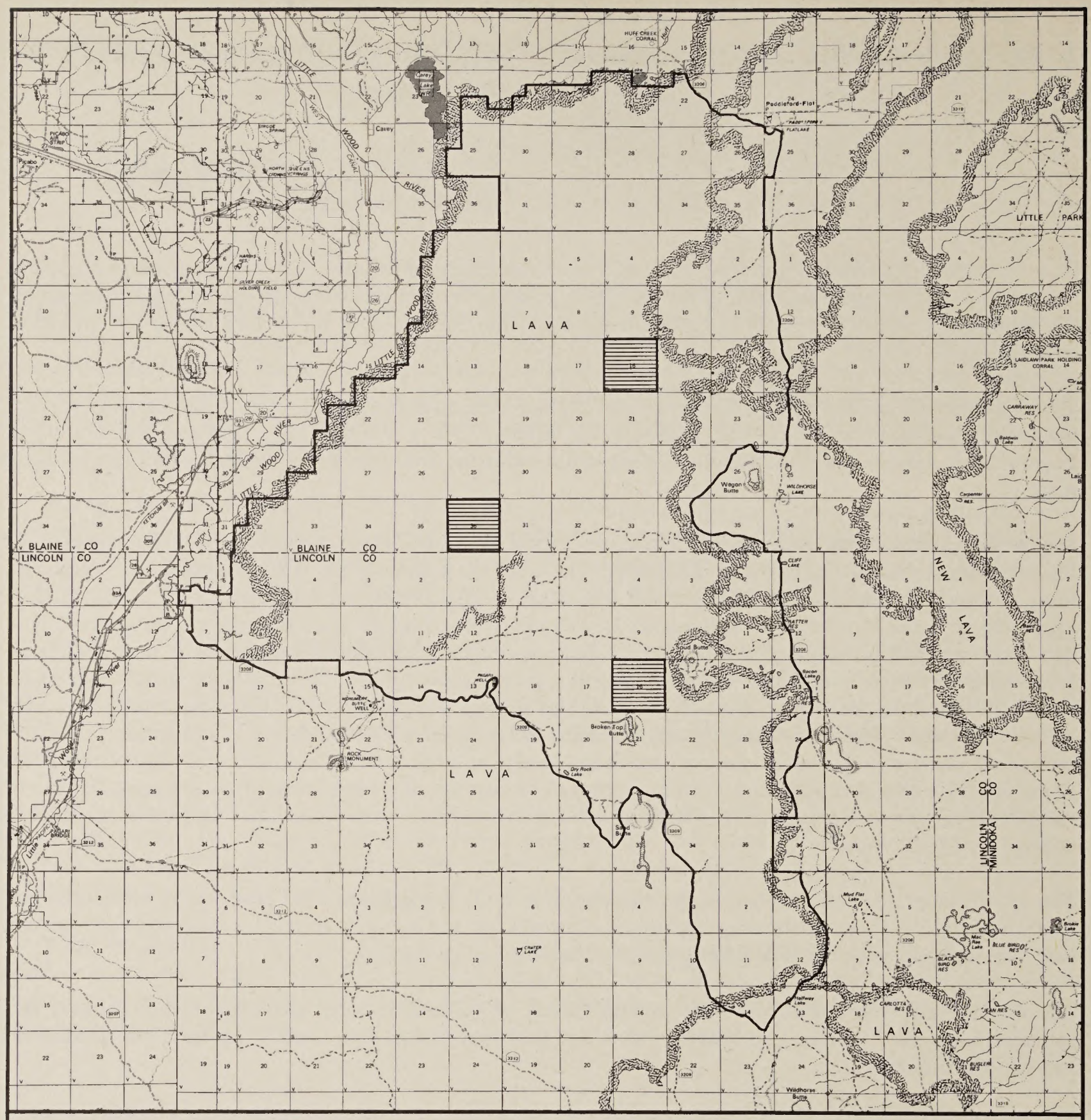
The WSA's large size and remoteness, in combination with the topographic relief provided by pressure ridges, buttes and craters, offers outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation in an arid environment. Recreation opportunities include hiking, camping, hunting and spelunking.

The Raven's Eye WSA contains a tremendous variety of volcanic features including pressure ridges, lava cascades, subsidence craters, lava blisters, buttes and pahoehoe and aa lava flows. This variety is of scientific and educational interest.

The Intermountain Sagebrush Province/Sagebrush Steppe Ecosystem is the ecosystem represented in the WSA. In Idaho, this Bailey-Kuchler classification ecosystem is represented in the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS) in the Craters of the Moon Wilderness administered by the National Park Service (NPS).

Conflicts with existing resource uses are limited. Existing grazing management would continue. Sheep camp related vehicle use would impact solitude and primitive recreation. Because only a small percentage of the area would be affected over a limited time period (April through mid-June and mid-October through December), the impact would be negligible.

The all wilderness recommendation would have an adverse impact on the implementation of proposed rangeland development projects. Wilderness management restrictions would preclude a proposed prescribed burning and seeding project.



RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS

RECOMMENDED FOR NONWILDERNESS

LAND OUTSIDE WSA RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS

SPLIT ESTATE

STATE

PRIVATE

1 0 1 2 3

Scale in Miles

ID-57-10
RAVEN'S EYE
PROPOSAL

APRIL 1988

Table 1 -- Land Status and Acreage Summary of the Study Area
RAVEN'S EYE WSA

Within Wilderness Study Area

BLM (surface and subsurface)	67,110
Split Estate (BLM surface only)	0
Inholdings (state, private)	1,920
Total	69,030

Within the Recommended Wilderness Boundary

BLM (within WSA)	67,110
BLM (outside WSA)	0
Split Estate (within WSA)	0
Split Estate (outside WSA)	0
Total BLM Land Recommended for Wilderness	67,110
Inholdings (state, private)	1,920
State land (outside WSA)	0

Within the Area Not Recommended for Wilderness

BLM	0
Split Estate	0
Total BLM Land Not Recommended for Wilderness	0
Inholdings (state, private)	0

3. Criteria Considered in Developing the Wilderness Recommendations

Wilderness Characteristics

A. Naturalness

The Raven's Eye WSA is natural in appearance. The majority of the WSA is unaffected by human impacts. Six vehicle trails totaling 20 miles traverse the area. The vehicle trails are used primarily by sheepherders and hunters and vegetation is growing between the tracks. Some of the trails are used so rarely that vegetation is growing in the ruts as well. One of the trails is partially obscured by wind-blown sand. Two fences and a fenced enclosure (Flat Top Corral) exist within the area. The fence is 5.75 miles long. The fences are noticeable only from a short distance.

Two seedings of crested wheatgrass cover 1,140 acres along the WSA's southwest and south-central edge. Seeded aerially in 1973, crested wheatgrass can now be found in numerous pockets of less than ten acres, broken up by rocky terrain and native vegetation. The seedings' indefinite boundaries and the interspersion of rocky outcrops and native vegetation reduce the visual impacts. Cheatgrass, a non-native species that invades after wildfires, also affects the naturalness of the WSA.

One stock water pond, Halfway Lake, is located just inside the WSA's southeastern boundary. An old canal passes through the WSA's southern edge. It is difficult to find in most locations.

B. Solitude

The Raven's Eye WSA provides outstanding opportunities for solitude. The area's size, topographic variety, remoteness and proximity to the Great Rift and Sand Butte WSAs combine to provide opportunities for solitude that are among the best in BLM's Shoshone District.

Vehicle traffic along the WSA's margin and agricultural activity along the WSA's western edge are visible from a small portion of the WSA. The impact on the WSA's outstanding opportunities for solitude is insignificant.

C. Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

The Raven's Eye WSA provides outstanding opportunities for a variety of recreation opportunities include hiking, camping, hunting, spelunking, photography and nature study. The combination of rugged terrain, lack of reliable water sources, absence of recreational facilities and the WSA's size add challenge and risk to the recreational opportunities. Recreational use of the WSA is estimated at less than 500 visitor days annually. The majority of this use occurs in the spring and fall.

D. Special Features

The Raven's Eye WSA offers significant scientific and educational values. The tremendous variety of volcanic features including pressure ridges, lava cascades, subsidence craters, lava blisters and pahoehoe and aa lava offer opportunities for geologic studies. The variety of topographic features, from buttes to vistas of grasslands and lava flows, offers high scenic values. In addition, the area provides habitat for burrowing owls, which are on the sensitive list for the State of Idaho.

Diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System

A. Assessing the Diversity of Natural Systems and Features as Represented by Ecosystems

Wilderness designation of the Raven's Eye WSA would add an ecosystem presently represented in the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS) by one area with 30,245 acres. There are 11 other BLM areas in the state under study with this ecosystem. This information is summarized in Table 2.

TABLE 2

Ecosystem Representation

Bailey-Kuchler Classification		NWPS Areas areas	NWPS Areas acres	Other BLM Studies areas	Other BLM Studies acres
Intermountain Province	Sagebrush				
			NATIONWIDE		
Desert-Vegetation Absent Ecosystem	Largely	1	30,245	12	870,403
			IDAHO		
Desert-Vegetation Absent Ecosystem	Largely	1	30,245	11	646,687
			NEVADA		
Desert-Vegetation Absent Ecosystem	Largely	0	0	1	223,716

B. Expanding the Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive Recreation Within a Day's Driving Time (Five Hours) of Major Population Centers

The Raven's Eye WSA is within a five-hour drive from Boise, Idaho. Table 3 summarizes the number and acreage of designated areas and other BLM study areas within a five-hour drive of the population center.

Table 3

Wilderness Opportunities for Residents of Major Population Centers

Population Centers	NWPS Areas		Other BLM Studies	
	areas	acres	areas	acres
Boise, Idaho	16	4,741,570	141	5,374,250

C. Balancing the Geographic Distribution of Wilderness Areas

The Raven's Eye WSA would not contribute to balancing the geographic distribution of areas within the NWPS. The NPS-administered Craters of the Moon Wilderness (43,243 acres) representing a similar landform and ecosystem is ten miles to the east. The Raven's Eye WSA as wilderness would not help balance the geographic distribution of opportunities to attain diverse wilderness experiences. Rather, designation would expand opportunities in the NWPS currently available only within the Craters of the Moon National Monument.

Manageability

The Raven's Eye WSA can reasonably be managed as wilderness to preserve values now present in the area. Conflicts with existing resource uses are limited. Continuation of existing livestock operations is a minor manageability conflict. Sheep camp related vehicle use on vehicle trails in the WSA would impact opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation. However, the vehicle use would affect less than 30 percent of the WSA for a limited time during the year (April through mid-June and mid-October through December).

Wilderness management would restrict fire suppression activities. Limitations would result in larger wildfires burning through the southern part of the WSA, increasing the potential for the spread of cheatgrass.

There are three state inholdings totaling 1,920 acres in the WSA. The three sections are presently used solely for grazing. Based on U.S. Geological Survey/Bureau of Mines mineral reports for the area, mineral development of these sections is not anticipated. The sections have been identified for acquisition through an exchange with the state.

The Sand Butte WSA lies adjacent to and south, separated from the Raven's Eye WSA by only a road. This 20,792 acre WSA has similar high quality wilderness values and is also recommended suitable for wilderness designation. The proximity of the Sand Butte WSA enhances the manageability of the Raven's Eye WSA.

Energy and Minerals Resource Values

The Raven's Eye WSA has zero petroleum potential (Miller 1983), is classified as not prospectively valuable for geothermal resources (BLM 1985) and has low potential for locatable and saleable minerals. The mineral estates in the WSA are in federal ownership and are open to mineral entry. There are no mining claims or mineral leases within the WSA.

Impacts on Resources

The following comparative impact table summarizes the effects on pertinent resources for all the alternatives considered including designation or nondesignation of the entire area as wilderness.

Table 4
Comparative Summary of the Impacts by Alternative
WSA ID-57-10 (RAVEN'S EYE)

ISSUE TOPICS	PROPOSED ACTION (ALL WILDERNESS/NO ACTION)	NO WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE
Impacts on Wilderness Resources	All wilderness values would be totally maintained in approximately 65% of the WSA including the Craters of the Moon Lava Flow areas and older lava flows in the southeast and southwest parts of the WSA. Wilderness values in the remainder of the WSA would be seasonally impacted by vehicle use related to sheep camps and fence maintenance. Opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation in approximately 30% of the WSA would be degraded during the period from April through mid-June. Wilderness values in the southern and eastern parts of the WSA would benefit from the elimination of recreational ORV use. Restrictions on fire management could result in larger wildfires, increasing the potential for the spread of cheatgrass in the southern part of the WSA. Acquisition of 1,920 acres of state land inholdings would enhance natural values and opportunities for solitude and the manageability of the area.	All wilderness values would be maintained in the young, sparsely vegetated Craters of the Moon Lava Flow areas of the WSA (about 55% of the area). Wilderness values in the remainder of the WSA would be reduced by a brush-control project, range management related vehicle use and recreational ORV use. Natural values would be lost on 1,740 acres in the northeast part of the WSA as a result of brush control and drill seeding of crested wheatgrass. Opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation in approximately 30% of the WSA would be seriously degraded from April through mid-June as a result of sheep camp related vehicle use. Vehicle use to inspect seedings and fences and to maintain fences would also degrade opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation. The surface disturbance and sights and sounds of vehicles associated with recreational ORV use would degrade all wilderness values. Low-use vehicle trails would be maintained by ORV travel with the possibility of being expanded slightly. However, no increase in visitor use is projected above current levels and impacts would be confined to the existing trails.
Impacts on Recreational ORV Use	Recreational ORV use of less than 500 visitor days annually would be foregone. The impacts of shifting this use to other public lands would be negligible. Vehicle access for hunters would not be allowed.	There would be no impact on recreational ORV and hunting use.
Impacts on Grazing Facility Maintenance and Construction	Existing cattle and sheep grazing practices would continue. Range developments would be inspected on foot or horseback and repaired with vehicle support. This would increase the labor cost by 24%. Prescribed burning and seeding would not occur.	Existing cattle and sheep grazing practices would continue. Existing range development inspections and maintenance would continue. Prescribed burning and seeding would occur on 1,740 acres.
Impacts on Fire Management	Full suppression including use of pumper trucks, helicopters and bulldozers within the WSA would not occur.	There would be no impact on fire management.

Local Social and Economic Considerations

Designation of the area as wilderness would have no or minimal effects on the local social and economic situation.

Summary of WSA-Specific Public Comments

Public involvement has occurred throughout the wilderness review process. During public review of the Draft EIS, 14 comments supporting wilderness designation were received, making Raven's Eye WSA the most supported WSA analyzed in the DEIS. Nine of these comments contained no supporting reasons. The five comments with supporting reasons cited the area's resource values, wilderness opportunities and its value as a logical extension of the Sand Butte WSA. One comment cited the WSA's potential for gold associated with paleo hot springs as a reason to oppose wilderness designation of the area.

The U.S. Department of Energy, Bureau of Reclamation, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service, U.S. Department of Transportation, Environmental Protection Agency, and the Idaho Department of Fish and Game, Department of Health and Welfare, Department of Lands, Transportation Department, Department of Water Resources and Idaho State Historical Society commented on the Draft EIS. None of these comments specifically addressed the Raven's Eye WSA.

Little Deer Wilderness Study Area

1. The Study Area -- 33,531 acres

The Little Deer WSA (ID-57-11) is located in Blaine, Lincoln and Minidoka Counties nine miles east of Carey, Idaho. The WSA includes 33,531 acres of BLM-administered lands. There are no split estate lands within the area. There are 640 acres of state land inholdings within the WSA (see Table 1).

Portions of the WSA boundaries are formed by the following gravel roads: on the west by BLM and County Road 3206, the Carey-Kimama Road; and on the north by County Road 3218, the Laidlaw Park Road. Six separate unnamed nonsystem dirt roads form the boundary on the north and south sides of the WSA. The boundary also follows property lines around four state sections in addition to the inholding mentioned above. Most of the eastern boundary of the WSA is the edge of a lava flow.

The Little Deer WSA is characterized by two distinct landforms. The southwest and the northeast (Little Park) parts of the WSA are composed of an older lava flow covered by wind-deposited soils up to five feet deep. This terrain is gently rolling with little topographic relief. The remaining two-thirds of the WSA is covered with an extremely rugged, young lava flow. This "aa" (Hawaiian word for "hard on the feet") lava flow has a clinkery, jagged and broken surface. Although elevations only range from 4,600 to 5,030 feet, there is tremendous topographic variety within the aa flow.

Vegetation varies with the landforms. The soil-covered older lava flow is dominated by brush with grasses and forbs interspersed. The brush canopy averages four feet. Vegetation is sparse on the young lava flow.

The WSA was studied under Section 603 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) and included in the Monument Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) Wilderness filed in July 1987. Two alternatives were analyzed in the EIS: a no wilderness alternative, which is the recommendation of this report; and an all wilderness alternative.

2. Recommendation and Rationale

0 acres recommended for wilderness

33,531 acres recommended for nonwilderness

The recommendation for the Little Deer WSA is to not designate the area as wilderness and release all 33,531 acres for other uses. The environmentally preferable alternative is the all wilderness alternative. It would cause the least change from the natural environment over the long term. The recommendation would use all practical means to avoid or minimize adverse environmental impacts.

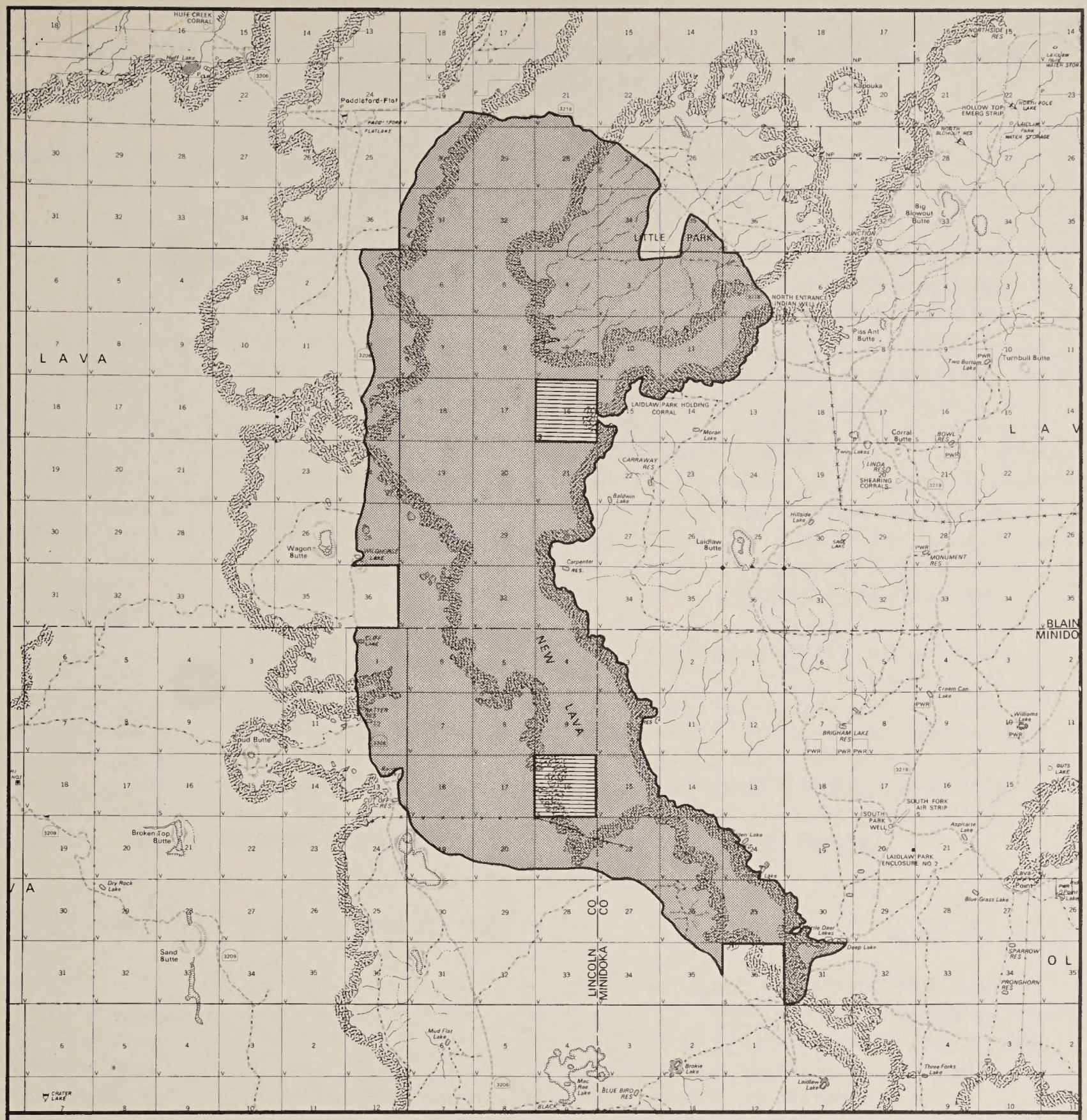
All 33,531 acres of federal land within the WSA are recommended nonsuitable for wilderness designation and are shown on the Little Deer Proposal map.

The quality of the wilderness values was the key consideration in the recommendation. While the WSA contained the wilderness values necessary for study, they are not considered to merit inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS). The interior lava of the WSA generally appears natural but there are several site-specific signs of man located within the WSA boundary. These are primarily rangeland developments which impact naturalness. Opportunities for solitude are due to the remoteness and lack of human activity in the area and are not due to any intrinsic values unique to the WSA. The Little Deer WSA would not add diversity to the National Wilderness Preservation System and does not have any significant or unusual specific features.

Although the Little Deer WSA offers opportunities to study primary succession, vegetation indigenous to new lava and the geology of lava flows, similar ecosystem and geologic features of higher wilderness quality are recommended for wilderness designation within the Great Rift and Raven's Eye WSAs.

The Great Rift (355,850 acres) and Raven's Eye (67,110 acres) WSAs contain ecosystems and geologic features similar to those of the Little Deer WSA. The Great Rift and Raven's Eye WSAs, however, have higher quality wilderness values because of their larger size, greater diversity of lava flow features and vegetation, and reduced influence from human impacts. Recommendation of the Great Rift and Raven's Eye WSAs as wilderness is adequate to represent Snake River Plain desert lava flow ecosystem features and opportunities in the NWPS. These WSAs also provide much higher-quality natural values and opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation than does the Little Deer WSA.

The nonwilderness recommendation would cause less impact on livestock operations within the Little Deer WSA. The nonwilderness recommendation would allow prescribed burning of 460 acres and drill seeding of created wheatgrass and forbs for brush control. The nonwilderness recommendation would also allow the full suppression of fires and would reduce the average acreage burned by each fire.



RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS

RECOMMENDED FOR NONWILDERNESS

LAND OUTSIDE WSA RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS

SPLIT ESTATE

STATE

PRIVATE

N

1 0 1 2 3

Scale in Miles

ID-57-11
LITTLE DEER
PROPOSAL

APRIL 1988

Table 1 -- Land Status and Acreage Summary of the Study Area
LITTLE DEER WSA

Within Wilderness Study Area

BLM (surface and subsurface)	33,531
Split Estate (BLM surface only)	0
Inholdings (state, private)	640
Total	34,171

Within the Recommended Wilderness Boundary

BLM (within WSA)	0
BLM (outside WSA)	0
Split Estate (within WSA)	0
Split Estate (outside WSA)	0
Total BLM Land Recommended for Wilderness	0
Inholdings (state, private)	0
State land (outside WSA)	0

Within the Area Not Recommended for Wilderness

BLM	33,531
Split Estate	0
Total BLM Land Not Recommended for Wilderness	33,531
Inholdings (state, private)	640

3. Criteria Considered in Developing the Wilderness Recommendations

Wilderness Characteristics

A. Naturalness

The Little Deer WSA is generally natural in appearance. However, there are several site-specific signs of man that impact the area including eight short vehicle trails with a total length of approximately 5.1 miles are located within the WSA. Short-bladed fire lines are spaced intermittently in the west-central part of the WSA. Vegetation is growing in the center of most of these vehicle trails and on the fire lines which greatly reduces their visual impact. Two small livestock water ponds, Carpenter Reservoir and Cliff Lake and a big game wildlife guzzler are also located within the WSA. Approximately one-half acre around the guzzler is fenced. Isolated small trash dumps are located on the western WSA boundary along the Carey-Kimama road.

B. Solitude

The WSA provides outstanding opportunities for solitude. The area's size, rugged topography, vegetation and remoteness combine to provide numerous opportunities for solitude. Solitude opportunities available in the WSA are similar to those afforded by the thousands of acres of land adjacent to the WSA, especially the much larger Great Rift and Raven's Eye WSAs. Traffic on the boundary road along the WSA's western margin is visible from a small portion of the WSA. The road's impact on the WSA's opportunities for solitude is insignificant in the area as a whole.

C. Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

The Little Deer WSA provides a variety of outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation. The opportunities, based on the rugged volcanic features and desert environment, include hiking, camping and hunting. However, there are no significant wildlife habitats, geologic features or scientific and educational values in the area that would attract a large number of visitors to the area.

Annual recreational use in the WSA is estimated at less than 100 visitor days. The majority occurs in the spring and fall.

D. Special Features

The Little Deer WSA does not contain any unique or significant special features.

Diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System

A. Assessing the Diversity of Natural Systems and Features as Represented by Ecosystems

Wilderness designation of the Little Deer WSA would add a new ecosystem to the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS). This ecosystem is represented in the NWPS by one designated area with 30,245 acres. There are 11 other BLM areas in the state with this ecosystem under study. This information is summarized on Table 2.

TABLE 2

Ecosystem Representation

Bailey-Kuchler Classification	NWPS Areas areas	NWPS Areas acres	Other BLM Studies areas	Other BLM Studies acres
Intermountain Sagebrush Province				
		NATIONWIDE		
Desert-Vegetation Largely Absent Ecosystem	1	30,245	12	870,403
		IDAHO		
Desert-Vegetation Largely Absent Ecosystem	1	30,245	11	646,687
		NEVADA		
Desert-Vegetation Largely Absent Ecosystem	0	0	1	223,716

B. Expanding the Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive Recreation Within a Day's Driving Time (Five Hours) of Major Population Centers

The Little Deer WSA is within a five-hour drive from Boise, Idaho. Table 3 summarizes the number and acreage of designated areas and other BLM study areas within a five-hour drive of the population center.

Table 3

Wilderness Opportunities for Residents of Major Population Centers

Population Centers	NWPS Areas		Other BLM Studies	
	areas	acres	areas	acres
Boise, Idaho	16	4,741,570	141	5,374,250

C. Balancing the Geographic Distribution of Wilderness Areas

The Little Deer WSA would not contribute to balancing the geographic distribution of areas within the NWPS. The NPS-administered Craters of the Moon Wilderness (43,243 acres), representing a similar landform and ecosystem, is located five miles to the northeast. The Little Deer WSA is partially composed of the same lava flow as the Craters of the Moon Wilderness.

Designation of the Little Deer WSA as wilderness would not help balance the geographic distribution of opportunities to attain diverse wilderness experiences.

Manageability

The Little Deer WSA is manageable as wilderness. The size of the WSA, proximity to the Great Rift and Raven's Eye WSAs, and distance from population centers combine to create a manageable area.

Management problems from unauthorized uses such as isolated trash dumping and ORV use would occur along the Carey - Kimama road. In addition, the WSA boundary is difficult to locate on the ground along the south half of the east boundary (along the lava flow) and along the faint vehicle trail on the northwest edge. Wilderness management would require frequent patrols and boundary signs to stop inadvertent unauthorized activities along these difficult-to-identify boundaries.

The sights and sounds of vehicles on three vehicle trails would degrade opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation. The three trails are used to tow sheep camps into bed grounds and deliver supplies from April 1 to June 15 and from October 16 to December 31. Although visitor use to the WSA also usually occurs in the spring and fall, the impacts on solitude and primitive recreation would be negligible in the WSA as a whole.

Energy and Minerals Resource Values

The Little Deer WSA has zero petroleum potential, is classified as not prospectively valuable for geothermal resources (BLM 1985), and has low potential for locatable and saleable minerals.

The mineral estates in the WSA are in federal ownership and open to mineral entry. There are no mining claims or mineral leases within the WSA.

Impacts on Resources

The following comparative impact table summarizes the effects on pertinent resources for all the alternatives considered including designation or nondesignation of the entire area as wilderness.

Table 4
Comparative Summary of the Impacts by Alternative
WSA ID-57-11 (LITTLE DEER)

ISSUE TOPICS	PROPOSED ACTION (NO WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE/NO ACTION)	ALL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE
Impacts on Wilderness Values	Natural values would be reduced on the 460 acres affected by brush control and crested wheatgrass seeding. Sheep camp related vehicle use and recreational ORV use would slightly reduce opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation. Surface disturbance associated with recreational ORV use would slightly degrade natural values.	All wilderness values would receive long-term Congressional protection. Existing marginal wilderness values would be maintained on all 33,531 acres of the Little Deer WSA. All wilderness values would benefit slightly because of elimination of ORV use. Acquisition of 1,280 acres of state land (1 inholding and 1 cherry-stem section) would enhance natural values and opportunities for solitude. Sheep camp related vehicle access would adversely impact opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation from April 1 through June 15 in less than 15% of the WSA.
Impacts on Livestock Grazing Operations	There would be no significant impact on livestock grazing operations. Existing cattle and sheep grazing practices would continue. Existing range development inspection and maintenance procedures would continue. The 460 acres burned and seeded would change from the poor condition class to the seeded class.	Existing cattle and sheep grazing practices would continue. Range development inspections and maintenance would be adequate. Range development inspections and maintenance would be adequate.
Impacts on Fire Management	There would be no impact on fire management.	Full fire suppression including use of pumper trucks, helicopters and bulldozers within the WSA would not occur.

Local Social and Economic Considerations

Social and economic factors were not considered a significant issue in the study.

Summary of WSA-Specific Public Comments

Public involvement has occurred throughout the wilderness review process. During public review of the Draft EIS, nine comments supporting wilderness designation were received. Six of these comments contained no supporting reasons for their position. The three comments with supporting reasons cited the area's wilderness opportunities, sage grouse habitat and native vegetation. No comments opposing wilderness designation were received.

The U.S. Department of Energy, Bureau of Reclamation, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service, U.S. Department of Transportation, Environmental Protection Agency and the Idaho Department of Fish and Game, Department of Health and Welfare, Department of Lands, Transportation Department, Department of Water Resources and Idaho State Historical Society commented on the Draft EIS. None of their comments specifically addressed the Little Deer WSA.

Bear Den Butte Wilderness Study Area

1. The Study Area -- 9,700 acres

The Bear Den Butte WSA (ID-57-14) is located in Minidoka and Blaine Counties 23 miles southeast of Carey, Idaho. The WSA includes 9,700 acres of BLM-administered lands. There are no split estate lands or inholdings within the area (see Table 1). The WSA's boundaries are formed by the following dirt roads: on the west by BLM Road 3407, The West Thumb Road; on the north by an unnamed nonsystem road; on the east by BLM Road 3406, The Thumb Cross Road; and on the south by BLM Road 405, The East Thumb Road. The boundary also follows a property line around one state-owned section.

The Bear Den Butte WSA is characterized by two distinct landforms. The edges of the WSA are composed of an older lava flow covered by wind-deposited soils up to five feet deep. Topography is flat to gently rolling, broken by occasional buttes and dry lakes. In the center of the WSA, a younger lava flow overlies the rolling topography. This "aa" (the Hawaiian word for "hard on the feet") lava flow has clinkery and jagged surfaces and contains a variety of holes, blisters, pressure ridges and collapse features. The northern boundary road separates this thumb of lava from the main Craters of the Moon lava flow. Elevations in the WSA range from 4,500 feet in the WSA's southwest corner to 5,104 feet at Bear Den Butte.

Vegetation varies according to the topography. The soil-covered older lava flow is dominated by brush with interspersed grasses and forbs. The young lava flow supports almost no vegetation.

The WSA was studied under Section 603 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) and included in the Monument Final Environmental Impact Statement, (EIS) Wilderness, filed in July 1987. Two alternatives were analyzed in the EIS: a no wilderness alternative, which is the recommendation of this report; and an all wilderness alternative.

2. Recommendation and Rationale

0 acres recommended for wilderness

9,700 acres recommended for nonwilderness

The recommendation for the Bear Den Butte WSA is to release all 9,700 acres for nonwilderness uses. The environmentally preferable alternative is the all wilderness alternative. It would cause the least change from the natural environment over the long term. The recommendation would use all practical means to avoid or minimize adverse environmental impacts.

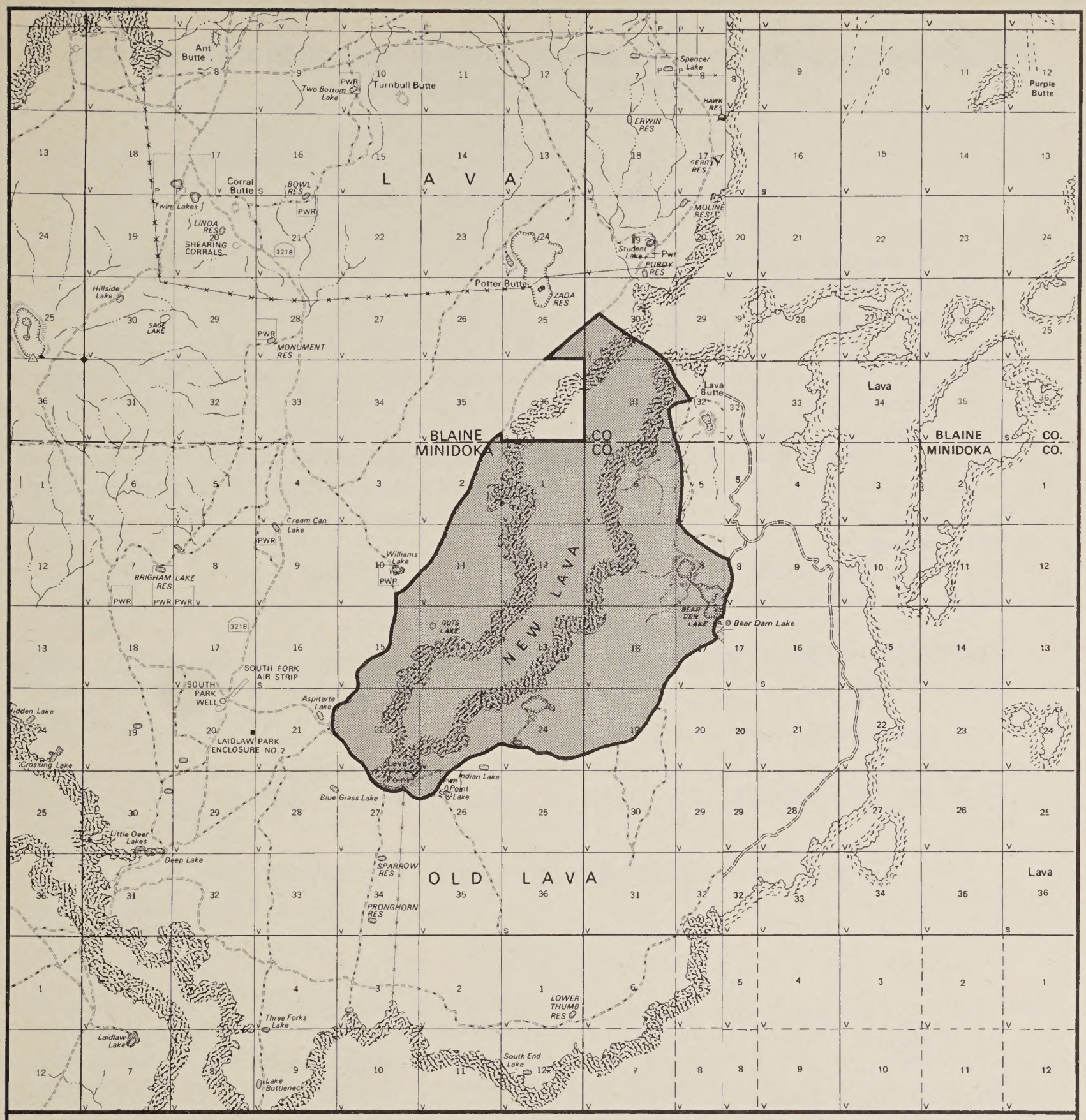
All 9,700 acres of federal land within the WSA are recommended nonsuitable for wilderness designation and are shown as the Bear Den Butte WSA on the Bear Den Butte Proposal map.

The quality of wilderness values was the key consideration in the recommendation. While the WSA contained the wilderness values necessary for study, they are not considered to merit inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation system. The Bear Den Butte WSA would not add diversity to the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS) and does not exhibit any significant or unusual features. Opportunity for solitude available in the WSA is similar to those afforded by thousands of acres of land, primarily lava flows, which are adjacent to the WSA. These opportunities are due to the remoteness and lack of human activity in the area and are not due to any intrinsic values unique to the WSA. The WSA does not offer outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation.

Although the Bear Den Butte WSA offers opportunities to study the vegetative and geologic features of a young aa lava flow, similar ecosystems and geologic features of higher wilderness quality are recommended for wilderness designation within the Great Rift and Raven's Eye WSAs.

The Great Rift (355,850 acres) and Raven's Eye (67,110 acres) WSAs contain ecosystems and geologic features similar to those in the Bear Den Butte WSA. The Great Rift and Raven's Eye WSAs, however, have higher quality wilderness values because of their large size, greater diversity of lava flow features and vegetation and reduced human influence. Recommendation of these WSAs as wilderness adequately represents the Snake River Plain desert lava flow ecosystems in the NWPS. The Great Rift and Raven's Eye WSAs also provide much higher quality opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation than does the Bear Den Butte WSA.

The no wilderness recommendation would result in less impact on livestock operations within the Bear Den Butte WSA. Permittees would be allowed to continue using vehicles to inspect and maintain existing range developments and to construct a new fence. In contrast, under wilderness management, permittee labor costs for construction, repair and inspection of range developments within the designated wilderness would increase by 50 percent due to restrictions on vehicle use. The no wilderness recommendation would also allow prescribed burning of 1,340 acres in the area for brush control. Wilderness designation would preclude prescribed burning.



RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS

RECOMMENDED FOR NONWILDERNESS

LAND OUTSIDE WSA RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS

SPLIT ESTATE

STATE

PRIVATE

1 0 1 2 3

Scale in Miles

ID-57-14
BEAR DEN BUTTE
PROPOSAL

APRIL 1988

Table 1 -- Land Status and Acreage Summary of the Study Area
BEAR DEN BUTTE WSA

Within Wilderness Study Area

BLM (surface and subsurface)	9,700
Split Estate (BLM surface only)	0
Inholdings (state, private)	0
Total	9,700

Within the Recommended Wilderness Boundary

BLM (within WSA)	0
BLM (outside WSA)	0
Split Estate (within WSA)	0
Split Estate (outside WSA)	0
Total BLM Land Recommended for Wilderness	0
Inholdings (state, private)	0
State land (outside WSA)	0

Within the Area Not Recommended for Wilderness

BLM	9,700
Split Estate	0
Total BLM Land Not Recommended for Wilderness	9,700
Inholdings (state, private)	0

3. Criteria Considered in Developing the Wilderness Recommendations

Wilderness Characteristics

A. Naturalness

The Bear Den Butte WSA is natural in appearance but there are several site-specific signs of man that impact the area including four vehicle trails (total length of two miles), two short fences (totaling less than one mile), 100 acres of fire rehabilitation seeding and a stock water pond. These imprints are located on the eastern, western and southern edges of the WSA. Although screened by vegetation and topography, the developments slightly reduce natural values in the older lava flow parts of the WSA. The outside sights and sounds of traffic on the WSA's boundary roads also slightly impact natural values in the older lava flow.

B. Solitude

The WSA provides outstanding opportunities for solitude. The area's topographic variety, vegetation, remoteness and proximity to the Great Rift WSA combine to provide numerous outstanding opportunities for solitude.

A boundary road surrounds the WSA. Vehicles on this road are visible from the fringes of the WSA. The boundary road and any traffic on it can also be seen or heard from the WSA's higher elevations. The impact of the road is insignificant.

C. Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

The Bear Den Butte WSA provides a variety of recreation opportunities. The rugged volcanic features and desert environment of the WSA provide outstanding opportunities for camping, hiking and hunting. Recreational use of the WSA is estimated at less than 100 visitor days annually. The combination of rugged terrain and lack of water or destination spots probably accounts for the low visitor use figures. Visitation to the area usually occurs in the spring and fall.

D. Special Features

The Bear Den Butte WSA does not contain any unique or significant special features.

Diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System

A. Assessing the Diversity of Natural Systems and Features as Represented by Ecosystems

Wilderness designation of the Bear Den Butte WSA would add an ecosystem not presently represented in the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS). This ecosystem is represented by one designated area with 30,245 acres. There are 11 other BLM areas in the state under study with this ecosystem. This information is summarized in Table 2.

TABLE 2

Ecosystem Representation

Bailey-Kuchler Classification	NWPS Areas areas	NWPS Areas acres	Other BLM Studies areas	Other BLM Studies acres
Intermountain Sagebrush Province				
		NATIONWIDE		
Desert-Vegetation Largely Absent Ecosystem	1	30,245	12	870,403
		IDAHO		
Desert-Vegetation Largely Absent Ecosystem	1	30,245	11	646,687
		NEVADA		
Desert-Vegetation Largely Absent Ecosystem	0	0	1	223,716

B. Expanding the Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive Recreation within a Day's Driving Time (Five Hours) of Major Population Centers

The Bear Den Butte WSA is within a five-hour drive from Boise, Idaho. Table 3 summarizes the number and acreage of designated areas and other BLM study areas within a five-hour drive of the population center.

Table 3

Wilderness Opportunities for Residents of Major Population Centers

Population Centers	NWPS Areas		Other BLM Studies	
	areas	acres	areas	acres
Boise, Idaho	16	4,741,570	141	5,374,250

C. Balancing the Geographic Distribution of Wilderness Areas

The Bear Den Butte WSA would not contribute to balancing the geographic distribution of areas within the NWPS. The NPS-administered Craters of the Moon Wilderness (43,243 acres), representing a similar land form and ecosystem, is located ten miles to the northeast. Designation of the Bear Den Butte WSA as wilderness would not help balance the geographic distribution of opportunities to attain diverse wilderness experiences.

Manageability

The Bear Den Butte is manageable as wilderness. The size of the WSA, proximity to the Great Rift WSA and distance from population centers combine to create a manageable area.

Management problems from unauthorized uses such as mineral extraction or ORV use are not expected. Restrictions on fire management activities in a wilderness setting would not result in significant changes in fire frequency or size in the Bear Den Butte area.

Contribution of existing livestock operations in the same manner and degree represents a minor wilderness manageability conflict.

The sights and sounds of vehicles on two vehicle trails near Bear Den Butte would degrade opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation. The two trails are used to tow sheep camps into two bed grounds and deliver supplies from April 16 to June 15 and from October 16 to December 15. Although visitor use to the Bear Den Butte WSA usually occurs in the spring and fall and the Butte is a feature of particular interest, the area affected by sheep camp related vehicle use is less than ten percent of the WSA. Impacts on solitude and primitive recreation in the entire WSA would be negligible.

Energy and Minerals Resource Values

The Bear Den Butte WSA has no petroleum potential. Although the WSA is classified as prospectively valuable for geothermal resources (BLM 1985), further study indicates the WSA has low potential based on indirect evidence and mineral data (Frederickson and Fernette 1983). The WSA has low potential for locatable and saleable minerals.

The mineral estates in the WSA are in federal ownership and are open to mineral entry. There are no mining claims or mineral leases within the WSA.

Impacts on Resources

The following comparative impact table summarizes the effects on pertinent resources for all the alternatives considered including designation or nondesignation of the entire area as wilderness.

Table 4
Comparative Summary of the Impacts by Alternative
WSA ID-57-14 (BEAR DEN BUTTE)

ISSUE TOPICS	PROPOSED ACTION (NO WILDERNESS/NO ACTION)	ALL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE
Impacts on Wilderness Values	The combination of existing recreational ORV use and livestock management related vehicle use would slightly reduce natural values and opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation in the vegetated areas of the older lava flows along the periphery of the WSA. Low-use vehicle trails would be maintained by ORV travel with the possibility of being expanded slightly. However, no increase in visitor use is projected above current levels. Impacts would be limited to existing trails.	All wilderness values would receive long-term Congressional approval. Wilderness values would be maintained on all 9,700 acres of the Bear Den Butte WSA. Sheep camp related vehicle access would adversely affect opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation from April through mid-June in less than 10% of the WSA. Elimination of vehicle use for access to range developments and elimination of recreational ORV use would slightly enhance wilderness values.
Impacts on Livestock Grazing Operations	Existing cattle and sheep grazing practices would continue. Existing range development maintenance would continue. Construction of 0.6 mile of fence would occur as planned.	Existing cattle and sheep grazing practices would continue. Permittees' labor costs for construction, repair and inspection of range developments within the WSA boundaries would increase by 50% due to wilderness management restrictions on vehicle use.
Impacts on Fire Management	There would be no impact on fire management.	Full suppression including use of pumper trucks and helicopters within the WSA would not occur. Fire size and frequency would not be significantly affected.

Local Social and Economic Considerations

Social and economic factors were not considered a significant issue in the study.

Summary of WSA-Specific Public Comments

Public involvement has occurred throughout the wilderness review process. During public review of the Draft EIS, a total of eight comments supporting wilderness designation were received. Six of these contained no supporting reasons. The two comments with supporting reasons cited the area's wilderness opportunities, scenic values, proximity to the Great Rift WSA, native vegetation, wildlife habitat and lack of resource conflicts.

The U.S. Department of Energy, Bureau of Recreation, U.S. Fish and Wildlife, National Park Service, U.S. Department of Transportation, Environmental Protection Agency and the Idaho's Department of Fish and Game, Department of Health and Welfare, Department of Lands, Transportation Department, Department of Water Resources and Idaho State Historical Society commented on the Draft EIS. None of their comments specifically addressed the Bear Den Butte WSA.

Shoshone Wilderness Study Area

1. The Study Area -- 6,914 acres

The Shoshone WSA (ID-59-7) is located in Lincoln County one mile northwest of Shoshone, Idaho. The WSA includes 6,914 acres of BLM-administered lands. There are no split estate lands or inholdings within the area (see Table 1). The WSA is bounded on the north and south by state and private lands. The east and west boundaries are formed by two unnamed roads.

The WSA consists of a recent lava flow. Pressure ridges, blisters, subsidence craters and other volcanic features are common in the WSA. Although the broken and rugged lava surface provides topographic relief, elevations range only from 3,781 feet on the west boundary to 3,970 feet on the east boundary.

Vegetation is sparse in the WSA. Although small pockets of vegetation are scattered throughout the area, the overall impression of the WSA is of a barren lava flow.

The WSA was studied under Section 603 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) and included in the Monument Final Environmental Impact Statement, Wilderness, filed in July 1987. Two alternatives were analyzed in the EIS: a no wilderness alternative, which is the recommendation of this report; and an all wilderness alternative.

2. Recommendation and Rationale

0 acres recommended for wilderness

6,914 acres recommended for nonwilderness

The recommendation for the Shoshone WSA is to release all 6,914 acres for nonwilderness uses. The environmentally preferable alternative is the all wilderness alternative. It would cause the least change from the natural environment over the long term. The recommendation would use all practical means to avoid or minimize adverse environmental impacts. All 6,914 acres of federal land within the WSA are recommended nonsuitable for wilderness designation and are shown as the Shoshone WSA on the Shoshone Proposal map.

The quality of the wilderness values was the key consideration in the recommendation. While this WSA met the minimum criteria for wilderness study, it does not contain wilderness values that would add quality and diversity to the National Wilderness Preservation System. The area does not exhibit any significant or unusual special features. The WSA does not offer outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation. There are no significant wildlife species or habitats, geologic features, or scientific and educational values in the area that would benefit from wilderness designation. Although the Shoshone WSA's overall appearance is generally natural, three areas in the WSA have been impacted by unauthorized surface lava rock removal. Areas where rock has been removed are distinguished by the dull reddish surface exposed after removal of the overlying black lava. These areas are obvious at close range. A vehicle trail across the WSA provides access to the rock removal areas. This vehicle trail has been physically blocked and rehabilitated. Vegetation is slowly regrowing on the trail.

Naturalness along the eastern edge is also altered somewhat by the seasonal impoundment of irrigation water in a ground water recharge area. A monitoring well is located inside the WSA boundary south of the recharge area.

The WSA's eastern boundary is located along the road to the Lincoln County Landfill. The WSA boundary road and numerous spur trails into the WSA are littered with an assortment of appliances, wire, construction material, household garbage and other miscellaneous trash commonly found near landfills.

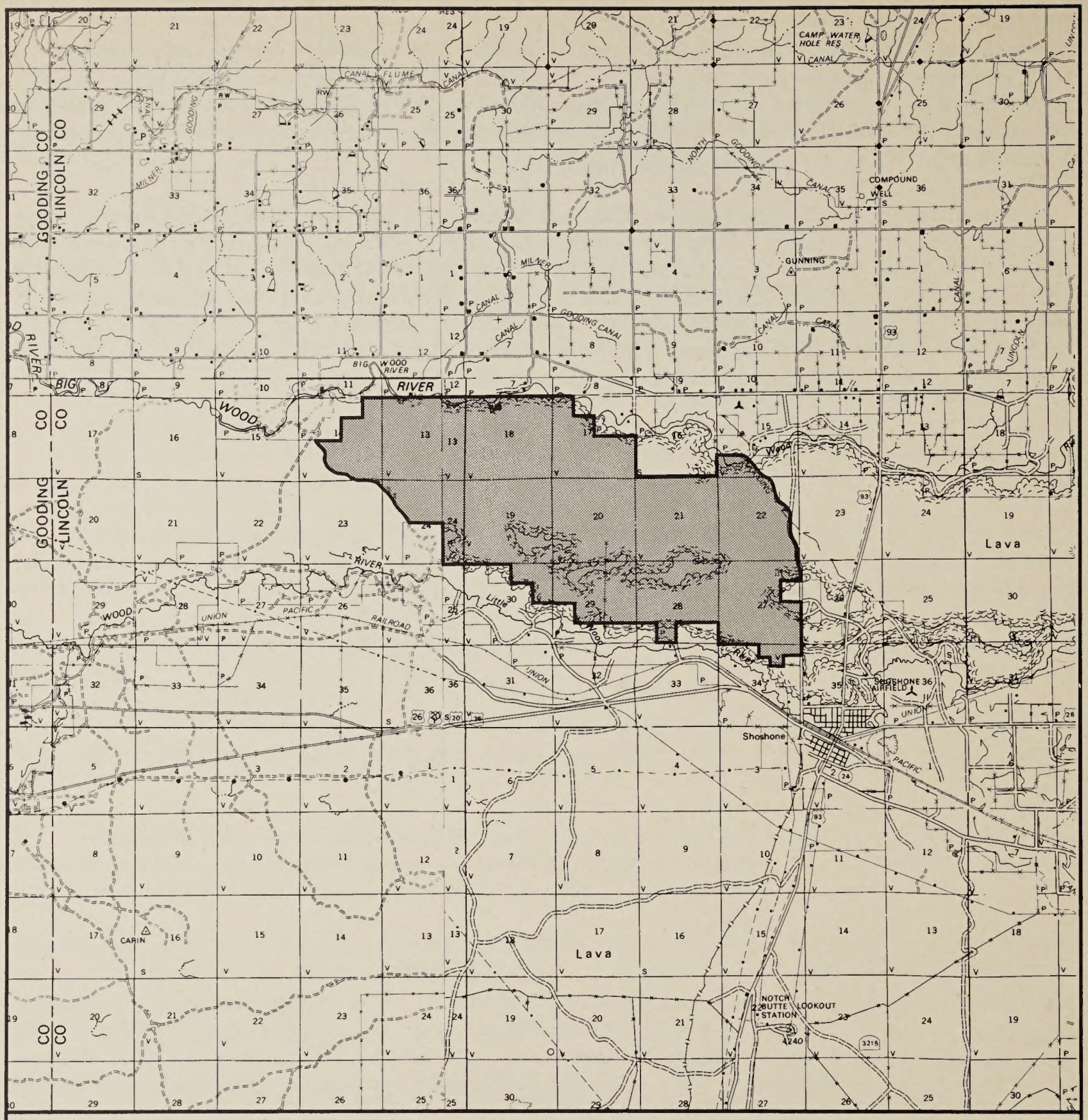
Approximately 1.1 miles of fence are also located within the WSA. The Union Pacific Railroad's main line is located one mile from the WSA's southern boundary. Trains can be seen from the edge of the WSA. Agricultural activity and boundary roads are also visible from the WSA's edges. Eight parcels of public land within the WSA adjacent to private agricultural lands have been farmed in trespass. These are located in and along the north, south and east parts of the WSA. In combination with the size and boundary configuration of the WSA, the result is an area marginally natural in appearance. These impacts will continue to degrade the area's natural values in the long term.

The Shoshone WSA is predominantly a lava flow which inherently provides opportunities for solitude and isolation as well as primitive camping and hiking. However, the quality of these opportunities is comparable to those found in any lava flow of similar size. Opportunities for solitude are limited by the small size of this WSA.

The Great Basin Province/Desert Ecosystem (3130-39) is the only ecosystem represented by the WSA. The Craters of the Moon Wilderness (43,243 acres) administered by the National Park Service (NPS) currently represents this ecosystem in Idaho. Designation of the Shoshone WSA as wilderness would not add an unrepresented ecosystem to the Natural Wilderness Preservation System.

Several characteristics of the Shoshone WSA could complicate administration of the area as wilderness. The WSA is adjacent to the Lincoln County Landfill. An easily accessible, well-maintained road forms the WSA's eastern boundary. Numerous short vehicle trails spur off this boundary road, and the WSA lies only .5 mile from the city limits of Shoshone. These factors create a perpetual unauthorized dumping problem in the eastern part of the Shoshone WSA.

The recommendation would allow slab lava to be made available for sale through the BLM's common variety mineral material sale program. It is unlikely that the lava rock covered by mining claims (925 acres) in the northeast part of the WSA would meet the criteria for a locatable mineral. Therefore, the claims would not be valid. However, approximately 2,000 tons of slab lava would meet the criteria for a common variety mineral and could be sold to the public through material sales. Alternatively, a community pit for slab lava rock could be established in the eastern part of the area. This resource is valuable because of the proximity of haul roads and distribution centers. Continued demand for this type of material is expected.



ID-59-7
SHOSHONE
PROPOSAL

APRIL 1988

Table 1 -- Land Status and Acreage Summary of the Study Area
SHOSHONE WSA

Within Wilderness Study Area

BLM (surface and subsurface)	6,914
Split Estate (BLM surface only)	0
Inholdings (state, private)	0
Total	6,914

Within the Recommended Wilderness Boundary

BLM (within WSA)	0
BLM (outside WSA)	0
Split Estate (within WSA)	0
Split Estate (outside WSA)	0
Total BLM Land Recommended for Wilderness	0
Inholdings (state, private)	0
State land (outside WSA)	0

Within the Area Not Recommended for Wilderness

BLM	6,914
Split Estate	0
Total BLM Land Not Recommended for Wilderness	6,914
Inholdings (state, private)	0

3. Criteria Considered in Developing the Wilderness Recommendations

Wilderness Characteristics

A. Naturalness

The quality of the wilderness values was an additional consideration in the recommendation. While the Shoshone WSA contained the wilderness values necessary for study, they are not considered to merit inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System. The WSA generally appears natural but there are several site-specific human signs, primarily rangeland developments, which impact naturalness locally. The majority of the existing impacts cannot be rehabilitated to a natural appearance.

B. Solitude

Areas in the center of the WSA provide outstanding opportunities for solitude. The topographic variety of the lava flow provides numerous opportunities to be isolated from the sights and sounds of others. Opportunities for solitude are not available on the WSA's edges. Solitude opportunities available in the WSA are similar to those afforded by thousands of acres of land adjacent to the WSA. These opportunities are due to the remoteness and lack of human activity in the area and are not due to any intrinsic values unique to the WSA.

C. Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

The rugged volcanic features and desert environment of the WSA provide accessible opportunities for primitive day hiking. Recreation use is estimated at less than 100 visitor days annually. The combination of rugged terrain, lack of water or destination spots and lack of special features probably accounts for the low visitor use figures.

D. Special Features

The Shoshone WSA does not contain any significant or unusual special features.

Diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System

A. Assessing the Diversity of Natural Systems and Features as Represented by Ecosystems

Wilderness designation of the Shoshone WSA would add an ecosystem presently represented in the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS) by one area with 30,245 acres. There are 11 other BLM areas in the state under study with this ecosystem. This information is summarized in Table 2.

TABLE 2

Ecosystem Representation

Bailey-Kuchler Classification	NWPS Areas areas	NWPS Areas acres	Other BLM Studies areas	Other BLM Studies acres
Intermountain Sagebrush Province				
		NATIONWIDE		
Desert-Vegetation Largely Absent Ecosystem	1	30,245	12	870,403
		IDAHO		
Desert-Vegetation Largely Absent Ecosystem	1	30,245	11	646,687
		NEVADA		
Desert-Vegetation Largely Absent Ecosystem	0	0	1	223,716

B. Expanding the Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive Recreation Within a Day's Driving Time (Five Hours) of Major Population Centers

The Shoshone WSA is within a five-hour drive of two major population centers. Table 3 summarizes the number and acreage of designated areas and other BLM study areas within a five-hour drive of the population centers.

Table 3

Wilderness Opportunities for Residents of Major Population Centers

Population Centers	NWPS Areas		Other BLM Studies	
	areas	acres	areas	acres
Boise, Idaho/Salt Lake City, Utah[1]	16	4,741,570	141	5,374,250

[1]Salt Lake City, Utah, and vicinity includes the cities of Provo, Orem and Ogden, Utah.

C. Balancing the Geographic Distribution of Wilderness Areas

The Shoshone WSA would not contribute to balancing the geographic distribution of areas within the National Wilderness Preservation System. The NPS-administered Craters of the Moon Wilderness (43,243 acres), representing a similar landform and ecosystem, is a one-hour drive to the northeast. The lava flow wilderness values within the Craters of the Moon Wilderness are superior in every respect to those of the Shoshone WSA. Therefore, designation of the Shoshone WSA as wilderness would not help balance the geographic distribution of opportunities to attain diverse wilderness experiences.

Manageability

The WSA would be manageable as wilderness. There are no private rights or conflicts within the area which would affect the ability to retain wilderness values.

The eastern one-fourth of the WSA is adjacent to the Lincoln County Landfill and within one-half mile to two miles of the Shoshone, Idaho, city limits. Numerous vehicle trails spur off the well-maintained eastern boundary road into the WSA. Unauthorized dumping is a major problem all along this boundary road and along the spur trails into the WSA. Unauthorized removal of surface lava rock is also a problem impacting naturalness in this part of the WSA.

Agricultural lands bound the Shoshone WSA on the north and south. Farming trespass is a historic problem on the arable parcels of the WSA along the edges of the lava flow. There would be administrative problems and costs associated with management of this area. Wilderness management would require intensive patrols of the area by personnel with law enforcement capability and boundary fences surrounding the area.

Energy and Minerals Resource Values

The Shoshone WSA has zero petroleum potential, is classified as not prospectively valuable for geothermal resources (BLM 1985) and has low potential for locatable minerals. The WSA has moderate potential for saleable slab lava rock. There are an estimated 2,000 tons of saleable common variety slab lava within the WSA. Mining claims within the WSA cover approximately 925 acres. There is no present production of any energy or mineral resources in the WSA.

Impacts on Resources

The following comparative impact table summarizes the effects on pertinent resources for all the alternatives considered including designation or nondesignation of the entire area as wilderness.

Table 4
Comparative Summary of the Impacts by Alternative
WSA ID-59-7 (SHOSHONE)

ISSUE TOPICS	PROPOSED ACTION (NO WILDERNESS/NO ACTION)	ALL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE
Impacts on Wilderness Values	All wilderness values would be lost on the 50 acre lava rock community pit. Wilderness values would be degraded on an additional 400 acres or less in the surrounding viewshed. Lava rock removal would degrade wilderness values on approximately 6.5% of the Shoshone WSA. Low-use vehicle trials would be maintained by ORV travel. However, no increase in visitor use is projected above current levels and impacts would be confined to the existing trails.	Wilderness values would receive long-term Congressional protection. All existing wilderness values would be maintained on 6,914 acres.
Impacts on Development of Locatable and Saleable Mineral Resources	There would be no impact on development of locatable and saleable mineral resources. Potential mineral resources, including approximately 2,000 tons of common variety slab lava, would be available for development.	Development of potential mineral resources would be foregone. This includes approximately 2,000 tons of common variety slab lava.
Impacts on Livestock Grazing Operations	Existing cattle operating procedures would continue. The level of grazing use would decrease 3 AUMs, or 1.8%. Ecological condition class would remain unchanged.	Existing cattle operating procedures would continue. The level of grazing use would decrease 3 AUMS, or 1.8%. Ecological condition class would remain unchanged.
Impacts on Fire Management	There would be no impact on fire management.	Full suppression, including use of pumper trucks, helicopters and bulldozers, within the WSA would not occur.

Local Social and Economic Considerations

Designation of the area as nonwilderness would have minimal affect on the local social and economic situation. If a community pit was developed for the removal of slab lava, there would be a local source for this stone. The approximate 2,000 tons of slab lava would be available for mining at about $5 a ton. Slab lava of similar quality is commercially available from local stone dealers at $40 a ton delivered. Slab lava of higher quality is available for mining about 15 miles north of Shoshone, Idaho, at $15 a ton.

Summary of WSA-Specific Public Comments

Public involvement occurred throughout the wilderness review process. During public review of the Draft EIS, five written comments supporting wilderness designation were received. None of these comments contained supporting reasons for their position. No comments opposing wilderness designation were received.

The U.S. Department of Energy, Bureau of Reclamation, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service, Federal Highway Administration, Environmental Protection Agency, and the Idaho Department of Fish and Game, Department of Health and Welfare, Department of Lands, Transportation Department, Department of Water Resources and Idaho State Historical Society commented on the Draft EIS. None of their comments specifically addressed the Shoshone WSA.

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